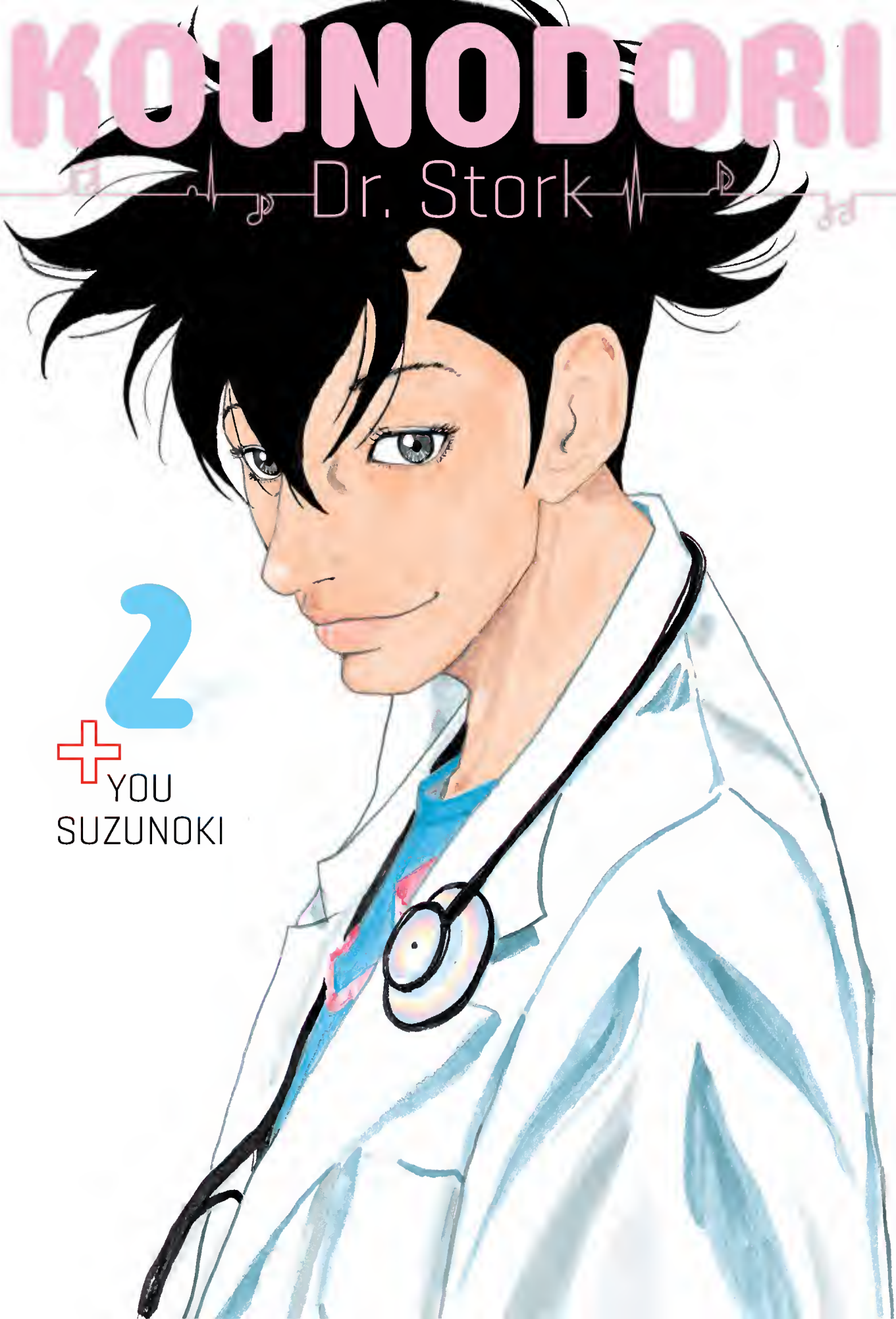
KOUNODORI

Dr. Stork



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YOU SUZUNOKI

KOUNODORI

Dr. Stork

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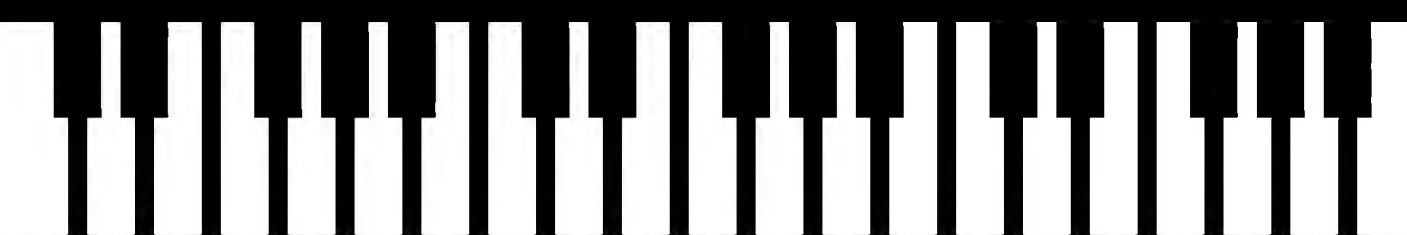
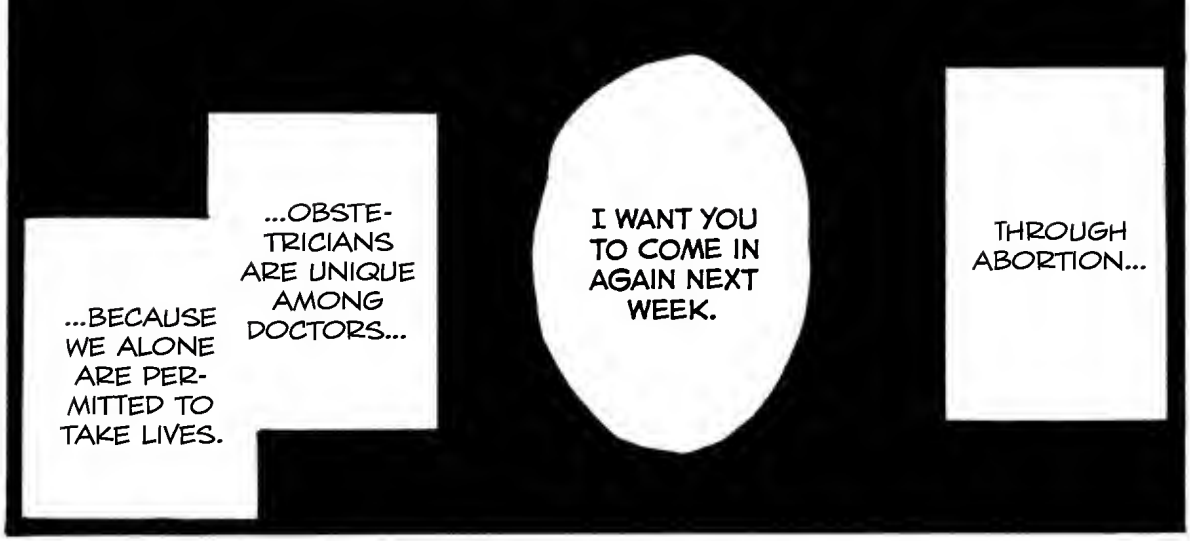
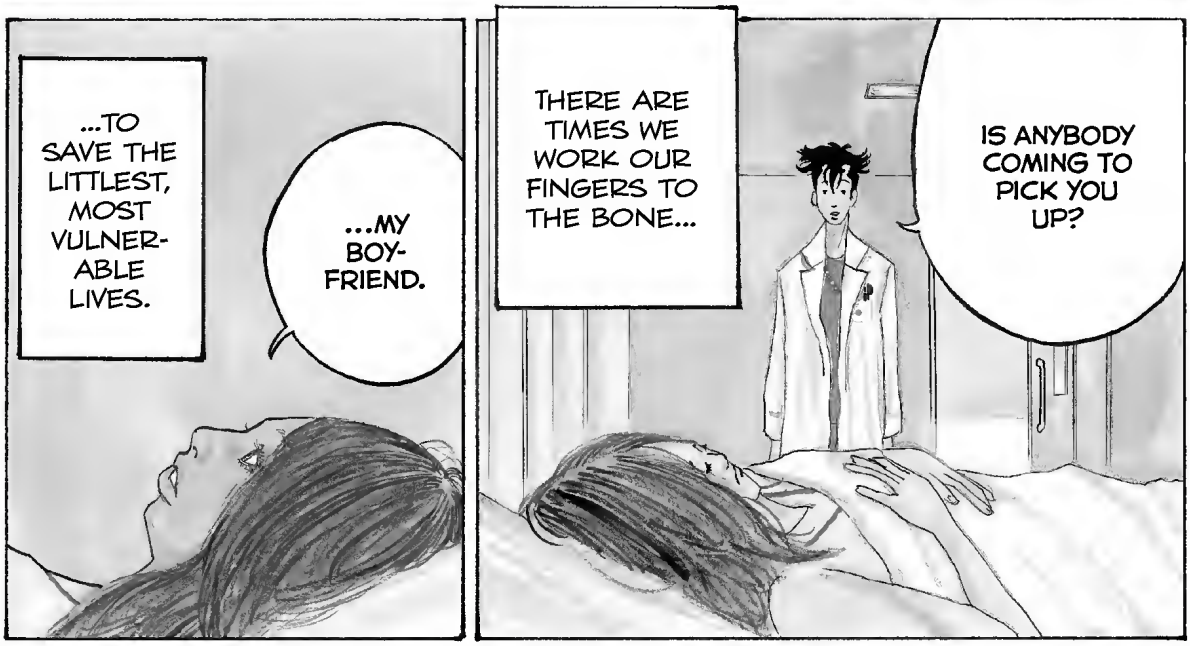
TRACK 4

Teenage Pregnancy



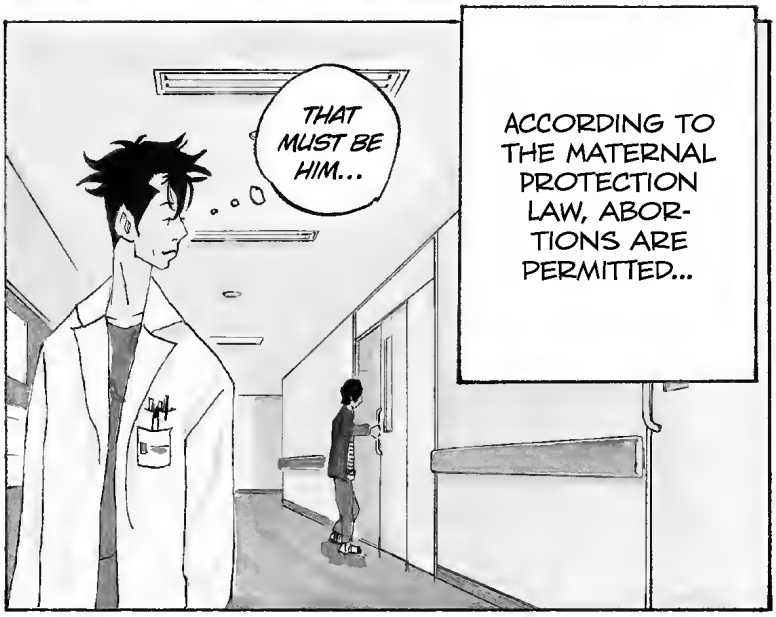

...BECAUSE WE ALONE ARE PERMITTED TO TAKE LIVES.
...OBSTETRICIANS ARE UNIQUE AMONG DOCTORS...
I WANT YOU TO COME IN AGAIN NEXT WEEK.
THROUGH ABORTION...


...TO SAVE THE LITTLEST, MOST VULNERABLE LIVES.
...MY BOYFRIEND.
THERE ARE TIMES WE WORK OUR FINGERS TO THE BONE...
IS ANYBODY COMING TO PICK YOU UP?

ONE MORE THING.
TELL THAT TO YOUR BABY.
...TO END THEM.
I SEE.
AND THEN THERE ARE TIMES WE STEP IN...
...
DOCTOR... I'M SORRY.

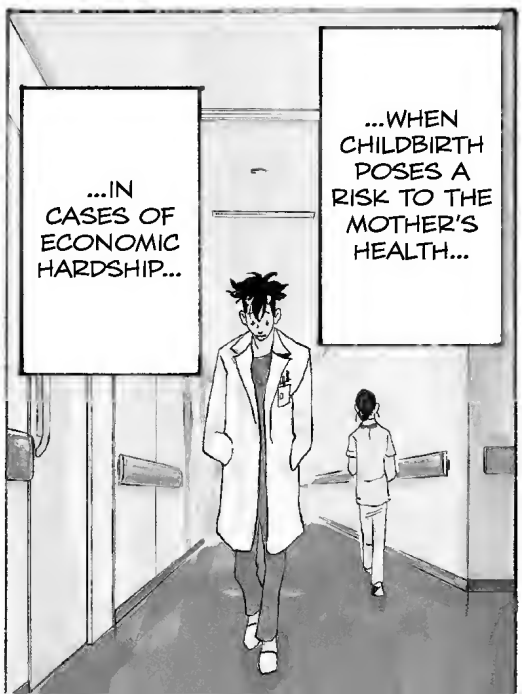
THAT'S OUR TASK.
PLEASE, LIVE A LIFE SO HAPPY...
...IT WOULD HAVE MADE YOUR BABY PROUD.

EVERY YEAR, THERE ARE OVER 200,000 ABORTIONS CONDUCTED IN JAPAN.
THAT'S ONE ABORTION FOR EVERY FIVE BIRTHS.

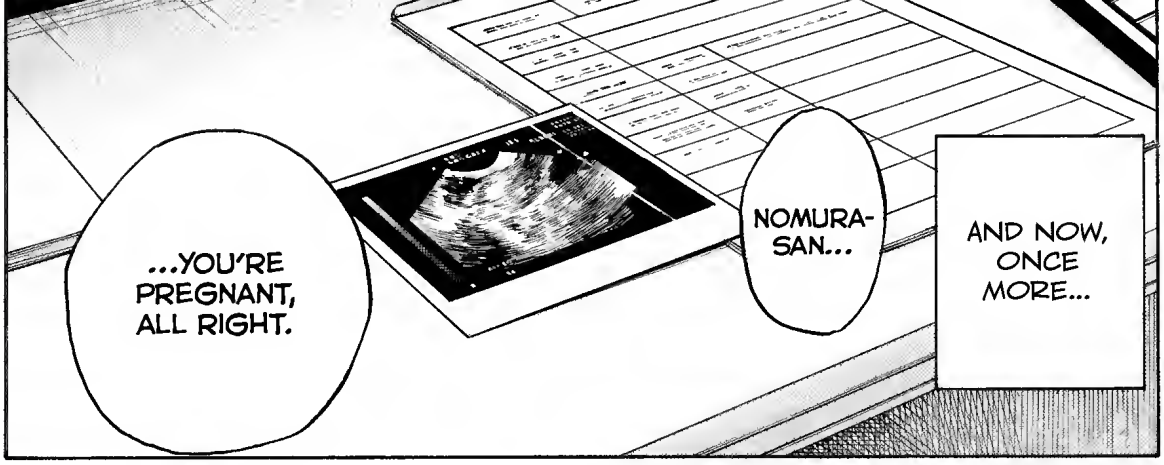

THAT MUST BE HIM...
ACCORDING TO THE MATERNAL PROTECTION LAW, ABORTIONS ARE PERMITTED...

BOW

...AND IN CASES OF SEXUAL ASSAULT.
WE SURE HAVE SEEN A LOT OF THAT LATELY! TEEN PREGNANCY, I MEAN.
NURSE STATION

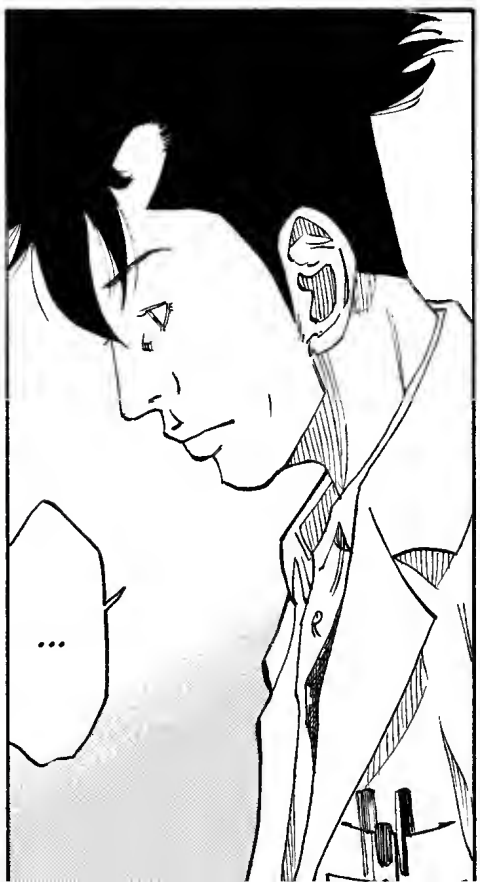

...IN CASES OF ECONOMIC HARDSHIP...
...WHEN CHILDBIRTH POSES A RISK TO THE MOTHER'S HEALTH...

IT'S TRUE... THE ATMO-SPHERE GETS RATHER DARK ANY DAY WE HAVE TO CONDUCT AN ABORTION
YEAH.
THINGS SURE DO GET GLOOMY AROUND HERE WHEN WE PERFORM ABORTIONS, HUH?
SINCE THOSE TWO ARE STILL STUDENTS, THEY CLAIMED ECONOMIC HARDSHIP AND DECIDED TO ABORT.
...
...AND THE FATHER...
AND OF COURSE, TO THE MOTHER...
A SADNESS THAT WILL LINGER IN THEIR HEARTS FOREVER.
...IT'S A DAY THEY'LL NEVER FORGET.


AND NOW, ONCE MORE...
NOMURA-SAN...
...YOU'RE PREGNANT, ALL RIGHT.

YOUR BABY'S PERFECTLY HEALTHY.

I'D SAY YOU HAVE BEEN FOR ABOUT 13 WEEKS NOW.

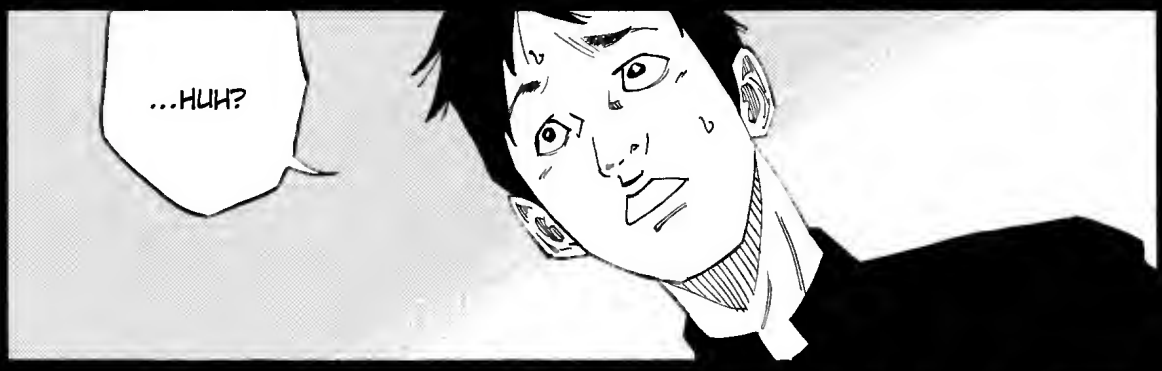

...

I CAN'T HAVE IT...
...I THINK.

...
...BUT WHO'S THE FATHER?
PARDON ME FOR ASKING...
I DON'T KNOW.
I'M PREGNANT.

DID YOU TAKE A PREGNANCY TEST?
REALLY?
HUH...?
...I SEE.
YEAH.
A KID? NO WAY!
N... NO WAY...
NOT NOW! WE'RE STILL IN HIGH SCHOOL!
WELL... I CAN'T...

DON'T WORRY. I'M NOT KEEPING IT.


...HUH?

I...
...

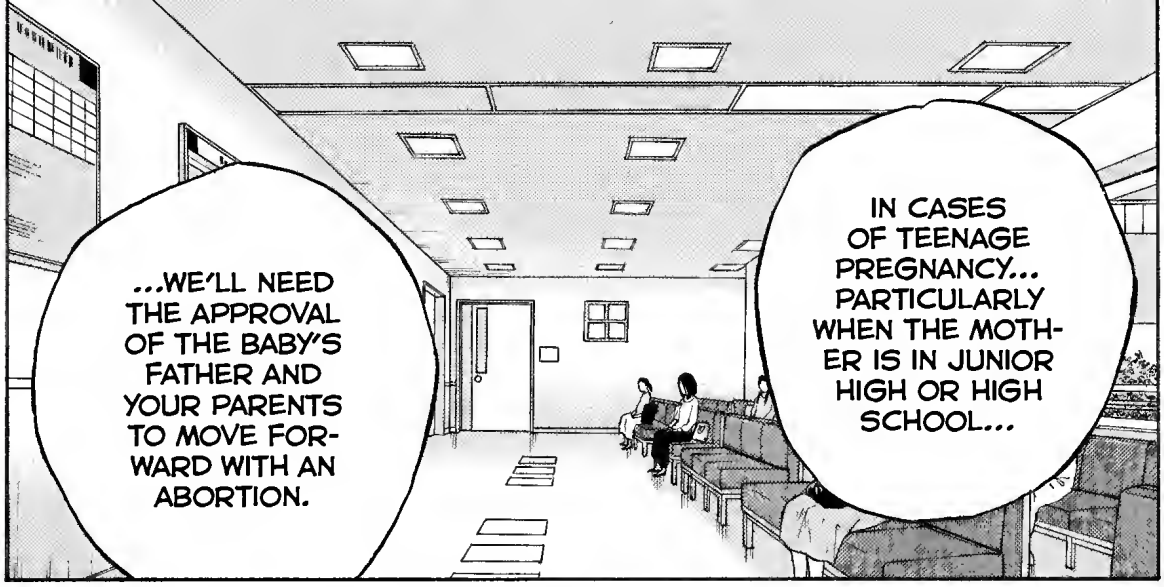
I MEAN, WE'RE STILL HIGH SCHOOL-ERS, RIGHT?
THERE'S NO WAY WE CAN RAISE A BABY!

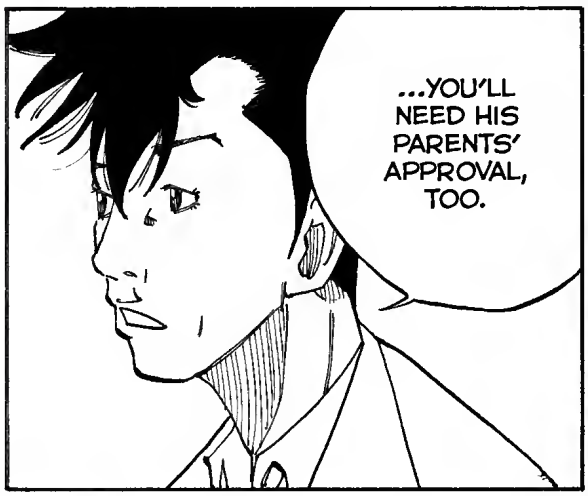
I... I'M SERIOUS ABOUT YOU, MIHO! I MEAN IT.
ONCE WE'RE ADULTS, I'LL DEFINITELY...

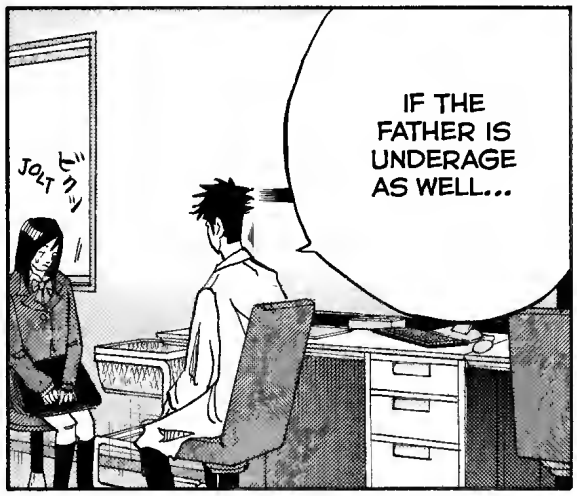
I'M AS MUCH TO BLAME AS YOU, ANYWAY.
I KNOW, TAKASHI.
COME ON, DON'T LOOK SO WORRIED.
BENI Note. TOKYO
Table
BABY
I'VE BEEN DYING TO SEE HIM FOREVER! I'M SO EXCITED!
OH, YEAH... THANKS FOR THE BABY TICKET!
I DON'T WANT TO CAUSE YOU ANY TROUBLE.
I'M GOING TO THE DOCTOR RIGHT NOW.
...SORRY.
...IT'S OKAY.

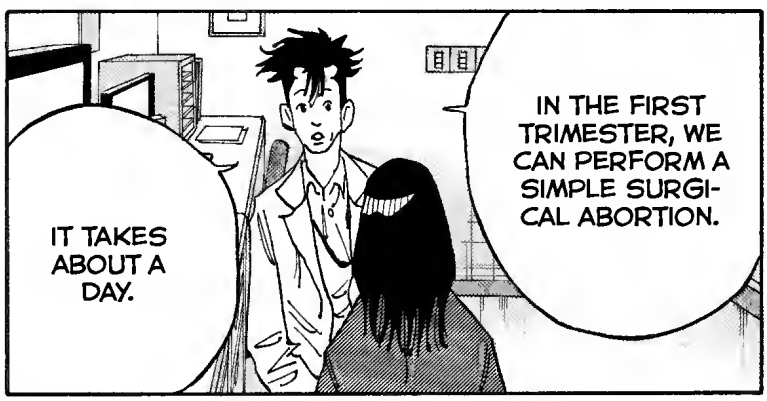
L...LET ME GO WITH YOU!
OKAY...
THANKS.
YOU DON'T KNOW?

I DON'T REMEMBER.
YOU CAN'T THINK OF ANY-ONE YOU MIGHT HAVE BEEN INTIMATE WITH ABOUT THREE MONTHS AGO?
JUDGING FROM THIS, YOU'RE A MINIMUM OF 11 WEEKS PREGNANT, NOW...
...LOOK. GO TALK TO YOUR PARENTS.
HAVE YOUR MOTHER OR FATHER BRING YOU BACK TO-MORROW.
...WHAT ABOUT YOUR PARENTS?
I HAVEN'T TOLD THEM.
...
I DON'T WANT MY PARENTS TO KNOW.

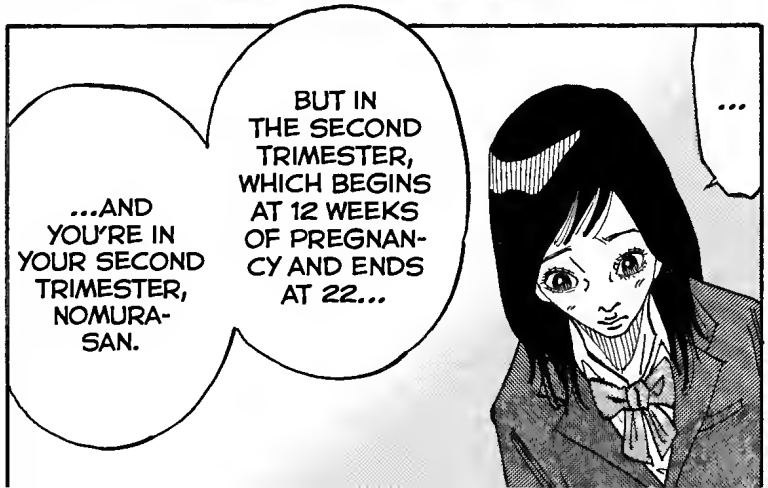

IN CASES OF TEENAGE PREGNANCY... PARTICULARLY WHEN THE MOTHER IS IN JUNIOR HIGH OR HIGH SCHOOL...
...WE'LL NEED THE APPROVAL OF THE BABY'S FATHER AND YOUR PARENTS TO MOVE FORWARD WITH AN ABORTION.

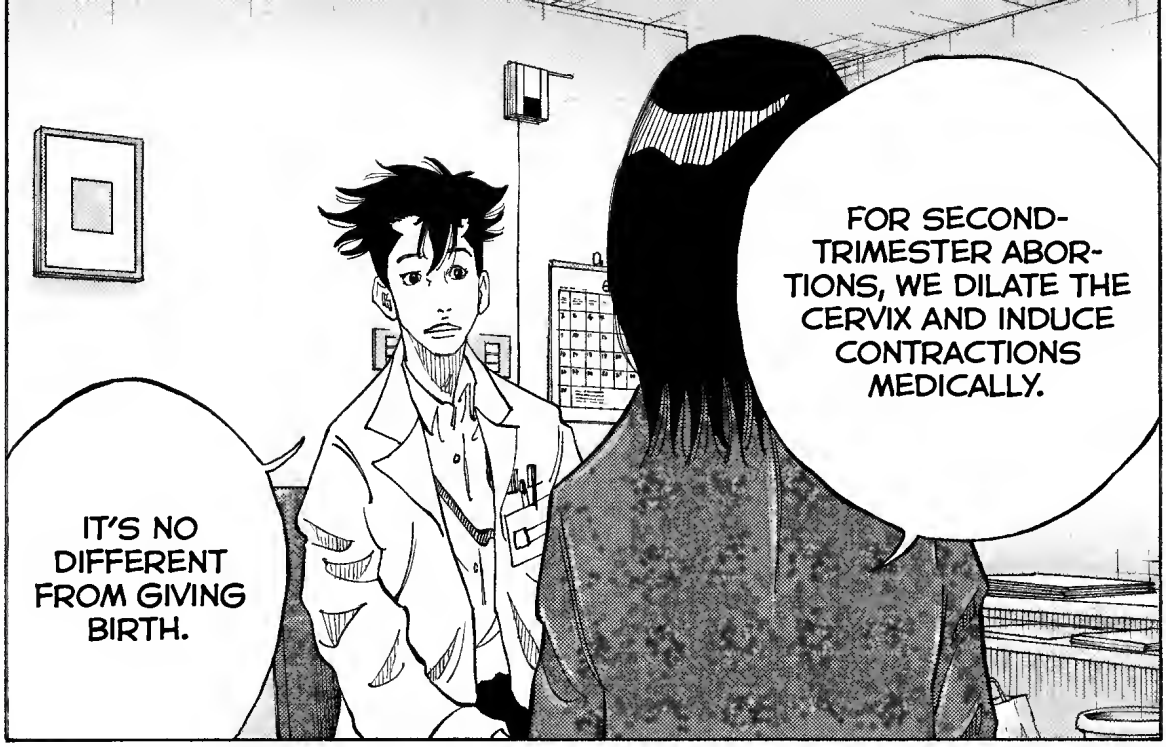

...YOU'LL NEED HIS PARENTS' APPROVAL, TOO.

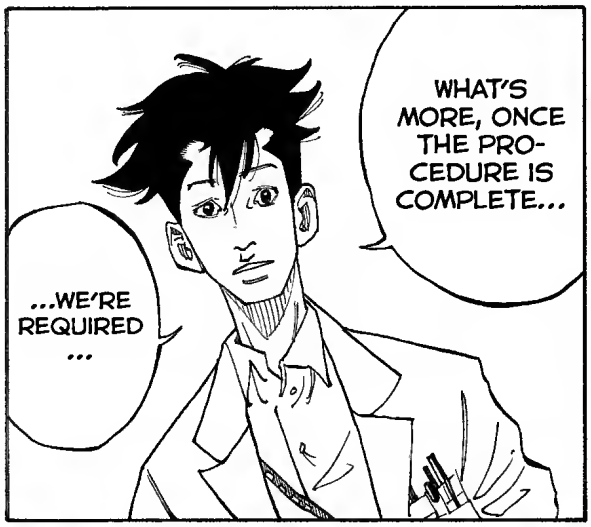

IF THE FATHER IS UNDERAGE AS WELL...
JOLT ビクッ

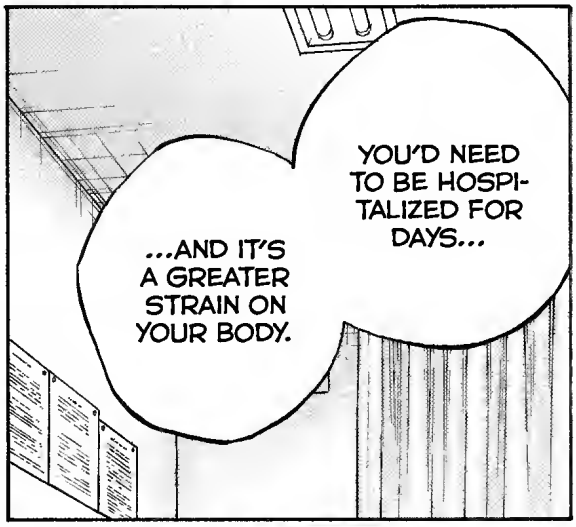

IN THE FIRST TRIMESTER, WE CAN PERFORM A SIMPLE SURGICAL ABORTION.
IT TAKES ABOUT A DAY.

THERE ARE TWO DIFFERENT MEANS OF INDUCING ABORTION. ONE WE DO IN THE FIRST TRIMESTER, AND ONE IN THE SECOND.


...
BUT IN THE SECOND TRIMESTER, WHICH BEGINS AT 12 WEEKS OF PREGNANCY AND ENDS AT 22...
...AND YOU'RE IN YOUR SECOND TRIMESTER, NOMURA-SAN.

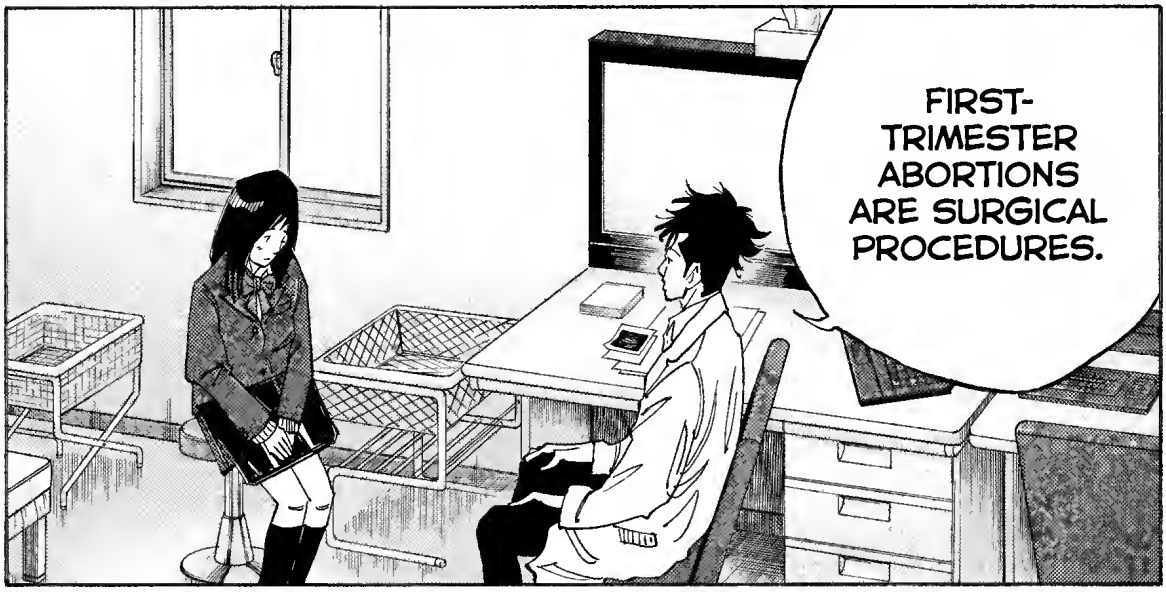

FOR SECOND-TRIMESTER ABORTIONS, WE DILATE THE CERVIX AND INDUCE CONTRACTIONS MEDICALLY.
IT'S NO DIFFERENT FROM GIVING BIRTH.


WHAT'S MORE, ONCE THE PROCEDURE IS COMPLETE...
...WE'RE REQUIRED ...


YOU'D NEED TO BE HOSPITALIZED FOR DAYS...
...AND IT'S A GREATER STRAIN ON YOUR BODY.

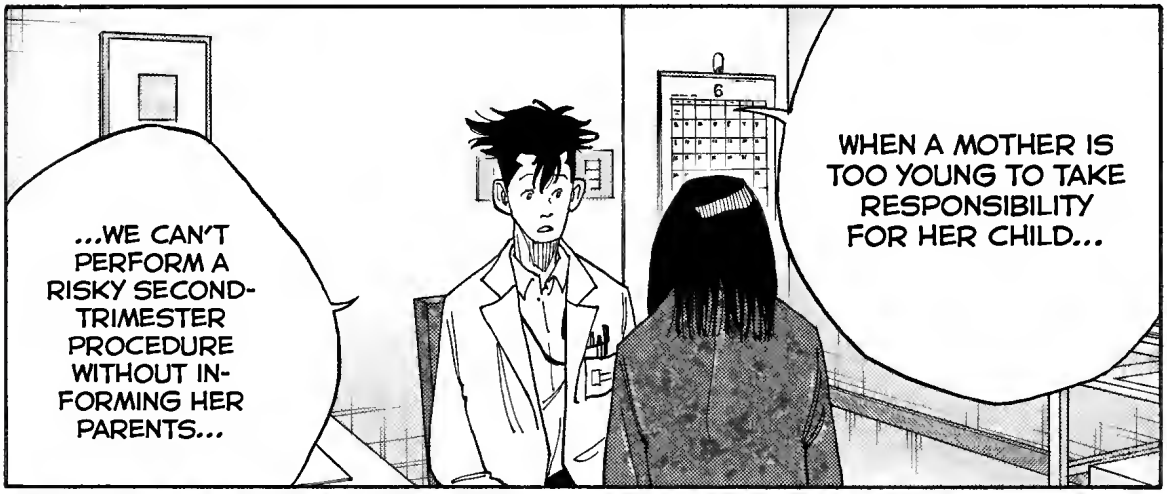
...TO SUBMIT A DEATH CERTIFICATE FOR THE BABY.
...

ONCE THE GOVERNMENT ACCEPTS THE DEATH CERTIFI-CATE...
...THEY SEND BACK A CREMATION PERMIT.
THE MOTHER MUST THEN CREMATE THE BABY AT THE DESIGNATED DAY AND TIME.


FIRST-TRIMESTER ABORTIONS ARE SURGICAL PROCEDURES.

BUT SECOND-TRIMESTER ABORTIONS ARE NOT.
...

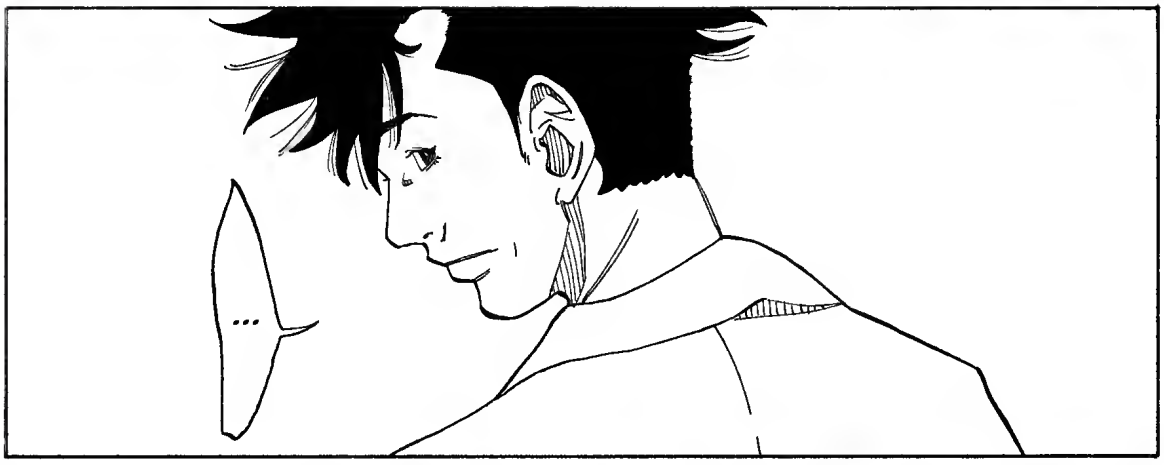
THEY'RE DELIVERIES.


...WE CAN'T PERFORM A RISKY SECOND-TRIMESTER PROCEDURE WITHOUT INFORMING HER PARENTS...
WHEN A MOTHER IS TOO YOUNG TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR HER CHILD...

...
...NO MATTER WHAT.

HERE, NOMURA-SAN. TAKE THIS.
IT'S YOUR BABY'S ULTRA-SOUND PHOTO.
...THANK YOU, DOCTOR.
THIS IS AN EXTREMELY IMPORTANT DECISION.
...
HUH...?
NOMURA-SAN.
WE'LL BE WAITING FOR YOU.
...
GO TALK TO YOUR PARENTS...
...AND HAVE THEM BRING YOU IN FOR EXAMINATION AS SOON AS YOU CAN.

キ〜ヤ
SQUEEZE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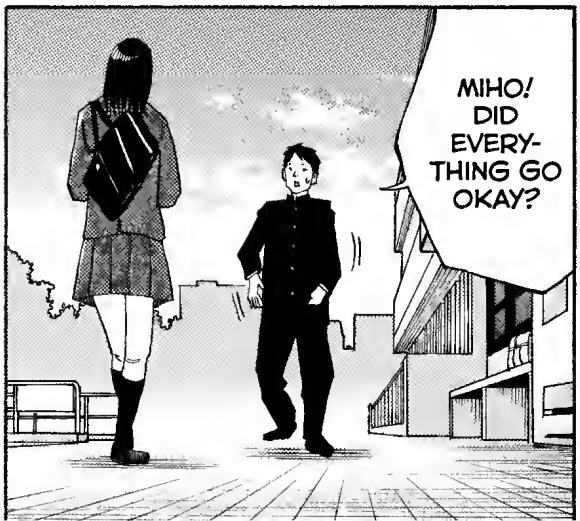
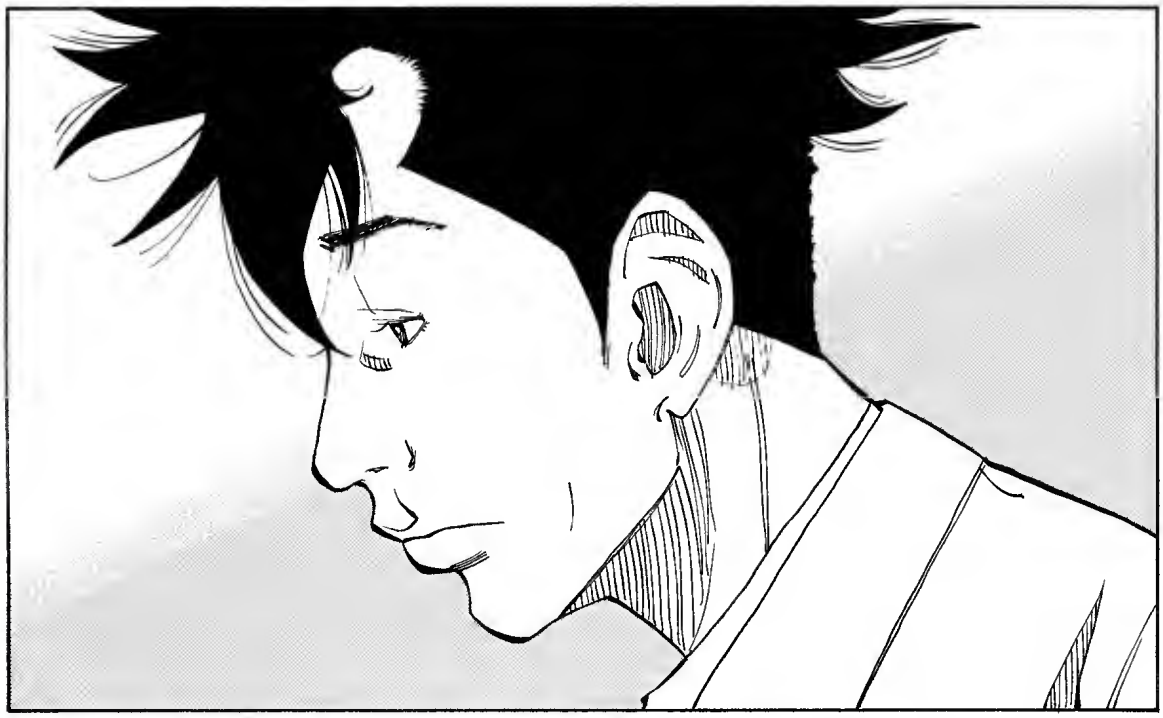
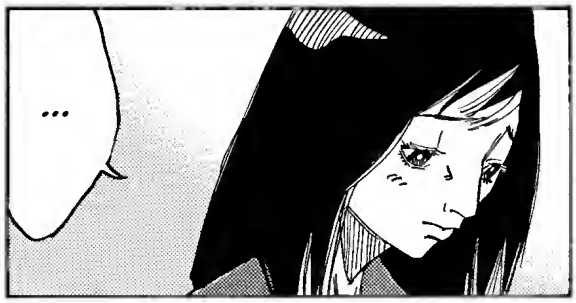

MIHO! DID EVERY-THING GO OKAY?

I'M... PREGNANT AFTER ALL.
13 WEEKS, HE SAID.
...
MIHO ...
I'M SORRY.
...
SHE DOESN'T REMEMBER WHO THE FATHER IS?
SHE DIDN'T SEEM LIKE THAT KIND OF GIRL...

THERE'S NO GIRL OUT THERE WHO COULD TAKE AN ULTRASOUND OF A BABY WHOSE FATHER SHE DOESN'T EVEN KNOW...
...
I GUESS YOU CAN'T ALWAYS TELL BY LOOKING!
KIDS THESE DAYS...
...AND HOLD IT THAT TIGHTLY, OR TREASURE IT THAT DEARLY.
NOT IN THE WHOLE WIDE WORLD.

DOCTOR...
WE'RE COUNTING ON YOU.

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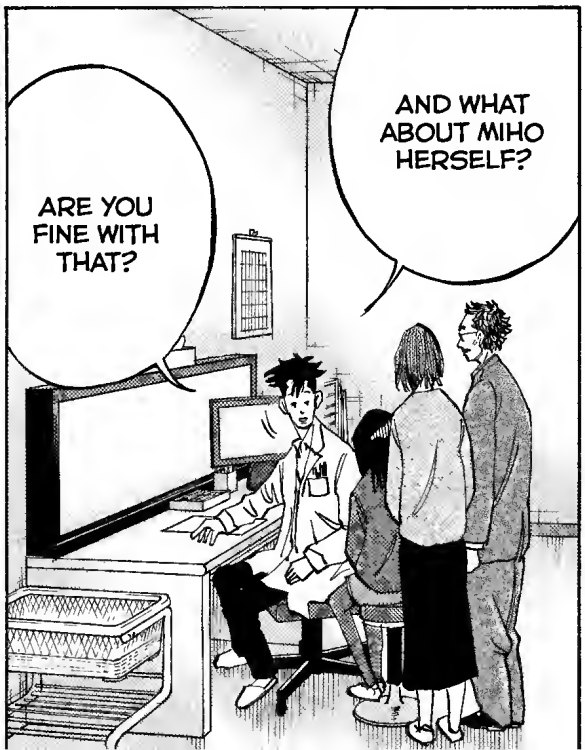
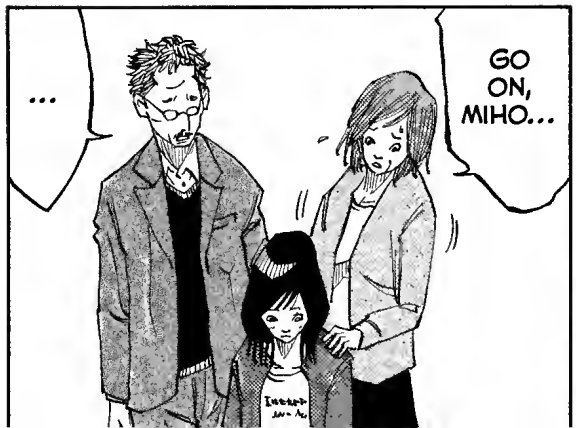
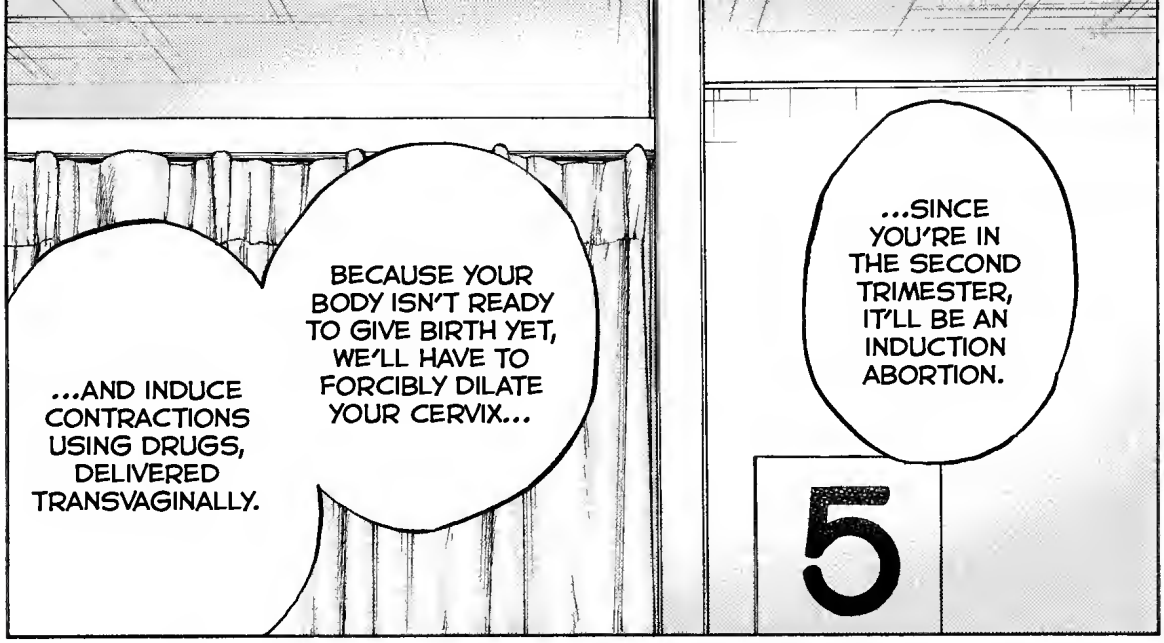
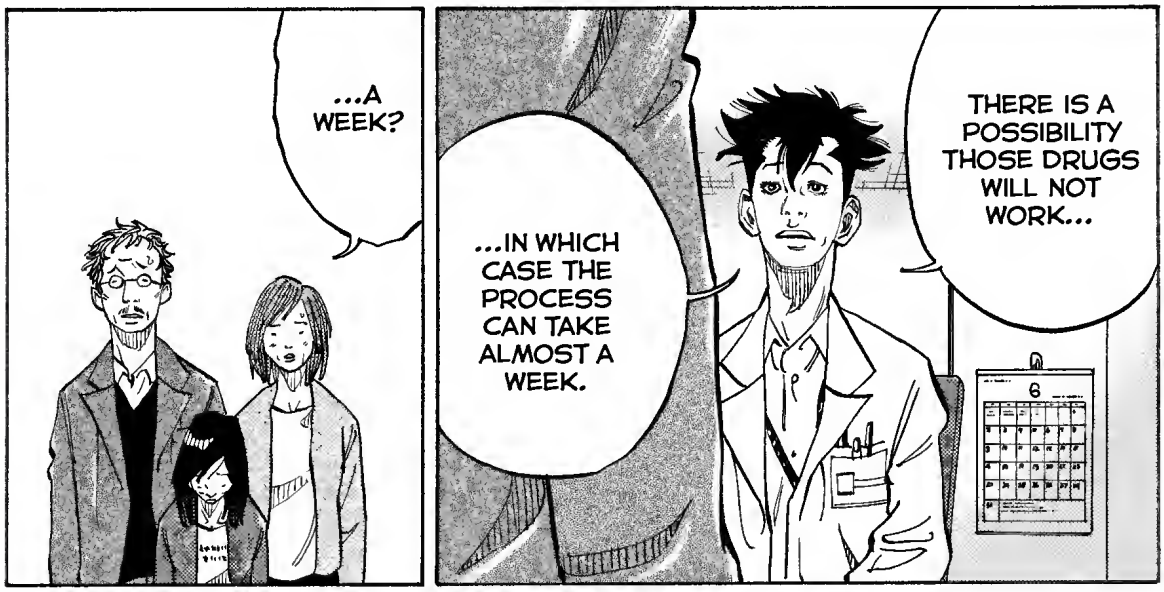
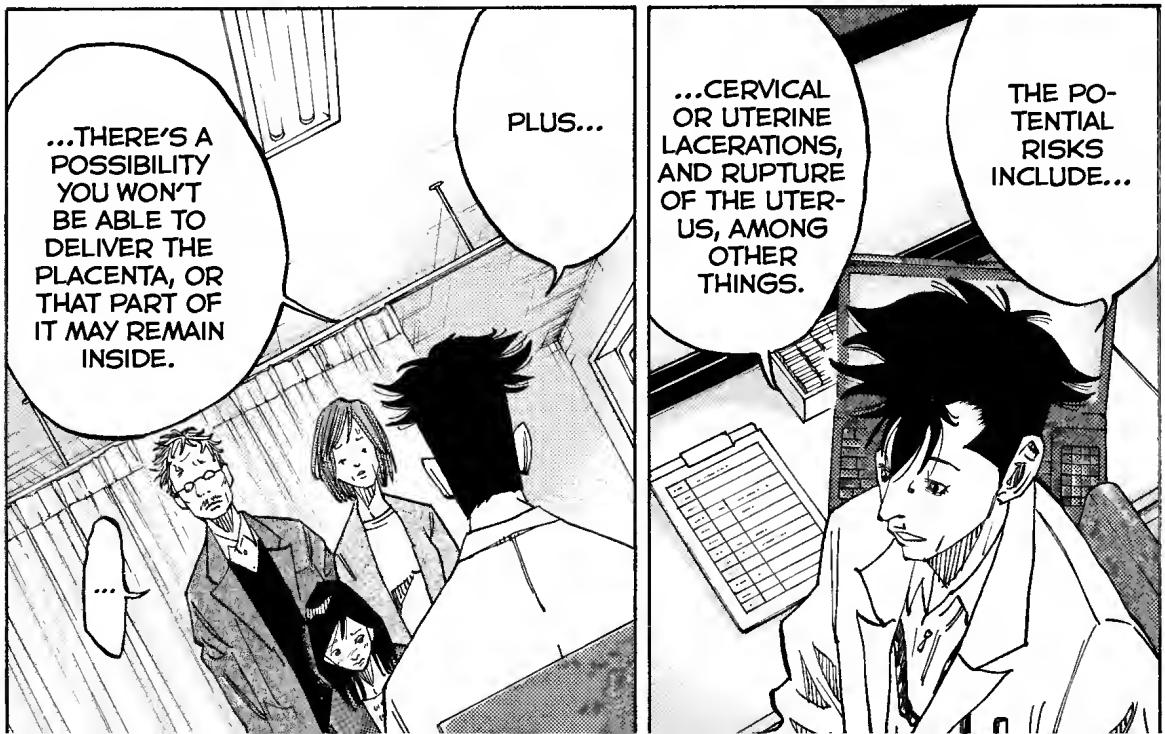

AND WHAT ABOUT MIHO HERSELF?
ARE YOU FINE WITH THAT?


...
GO ON, MIHO...

I'D LIKE TO ABORT IT.

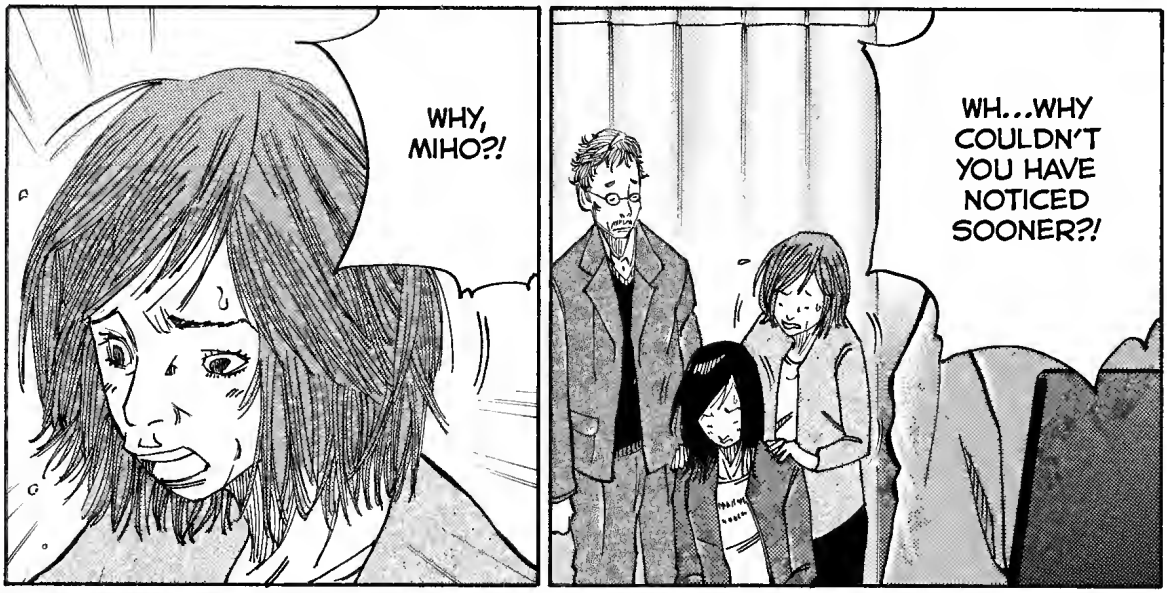

...SINCE YOU'RE IN THE SECOND TRIMESTER, IT'LL BE AN INDUCTION ABORTION.
5
BECAUSE YOUR BODY ISN'T READY TO GIVE BIRTH YET, WE'LL HAVE TO FORCIBLY DILATE YOUR CERVIX...
...AND INDUCE CONTRACTIONS USING DRUGS, DELIVERED TRANSVAGINALLY.


THERE IS A POSSIBILITY THOSE DRUGS WILL NOT WORK...
...IN WHICH CASE THE PROCESS CAN TAKE ALMOST A WEEK.
...A WEEK?


THE POTENTIAL RISKS INCLUDE...
...CERVICAL OR UTERINE LACERATIONS, AND RUPTURE OF THE UTERUS, AMONG OTHER THINGS.
PLUS...
...THERE'S A POSSIBILITY YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO DELIVER THE PLACENTA, OR THAT PART OF IT MAY REMAIN INSIDE.
...

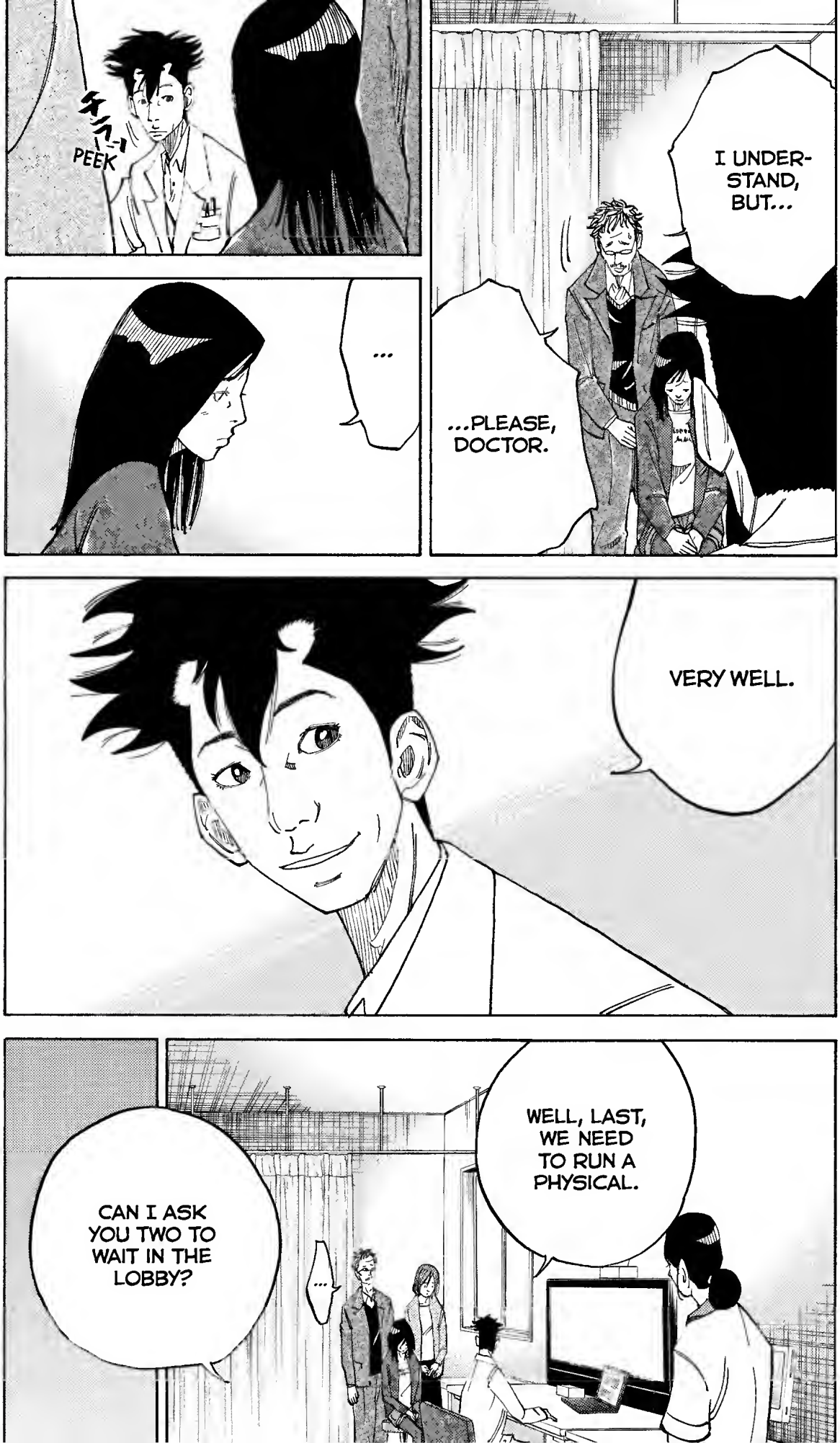
BUT *THOSE* PROCEDURES PRESENT A RISK OF TEARING OF THE UTERINE WALL...
...A CONDITION CALLED UTERINE PERFORATION.
THERE ARE PROCEDURES TO SCRAPE IT OUT IF IT COMES TO THAT.
CASES OF UTERINE PERFORATION AND RUPTURE...
...WHILE RARE...
THE ABDOMEN...?
...CAN FORCE US TO OPERATE THROUGH AN INCISION IN THE ABDOMEN.

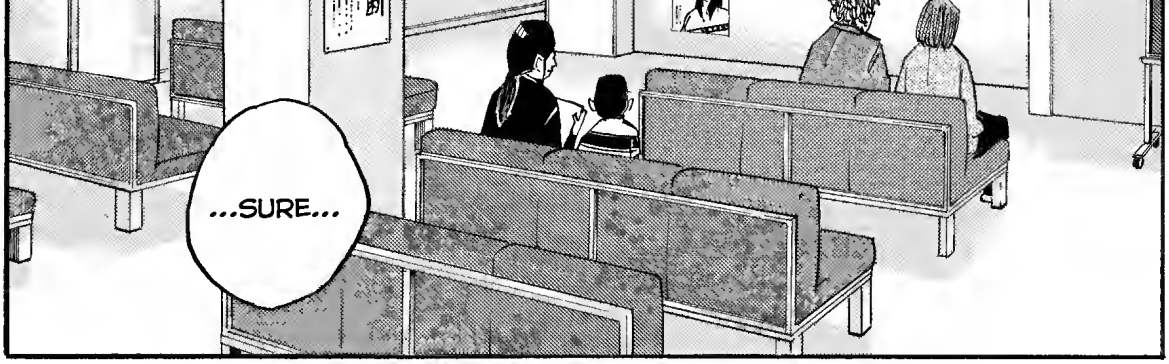
OH, MY...
ON TOP OF THAT, THERE'S ALWAYS THE RISK OF MASSIVE HEMORRHAGE AND INFECTION, AMONG OTHER THINGS.

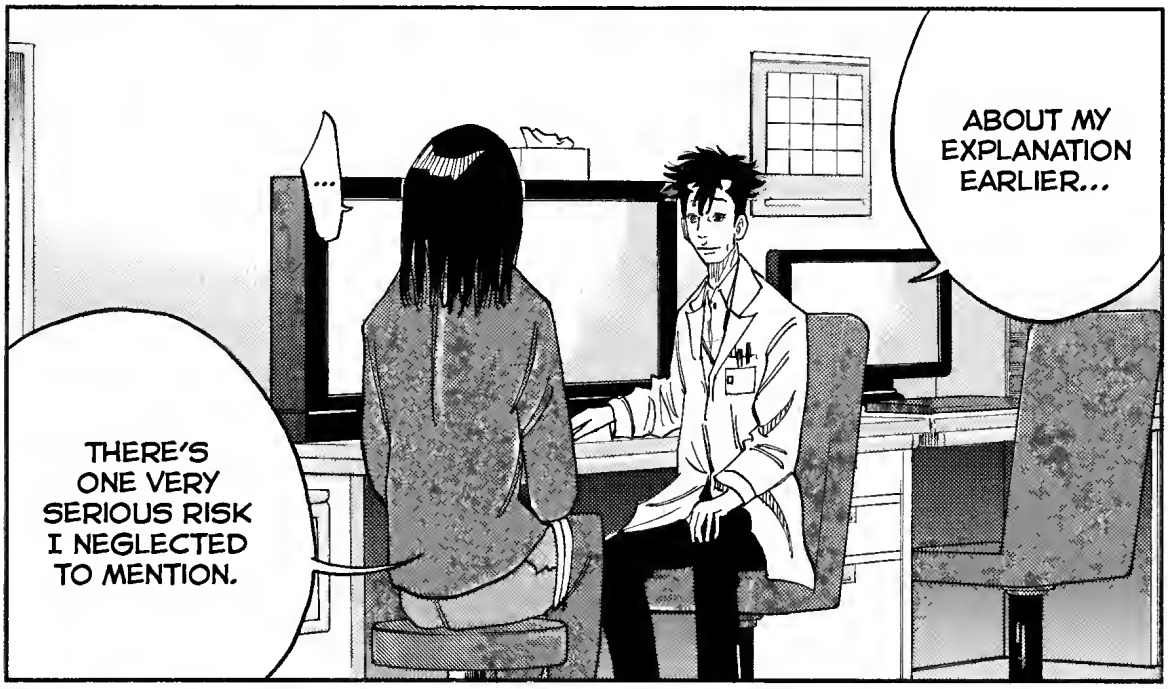

WHY, MIHO?!
WH...WHY COULDN'T YOU HAVE NOTICED SOONER?!

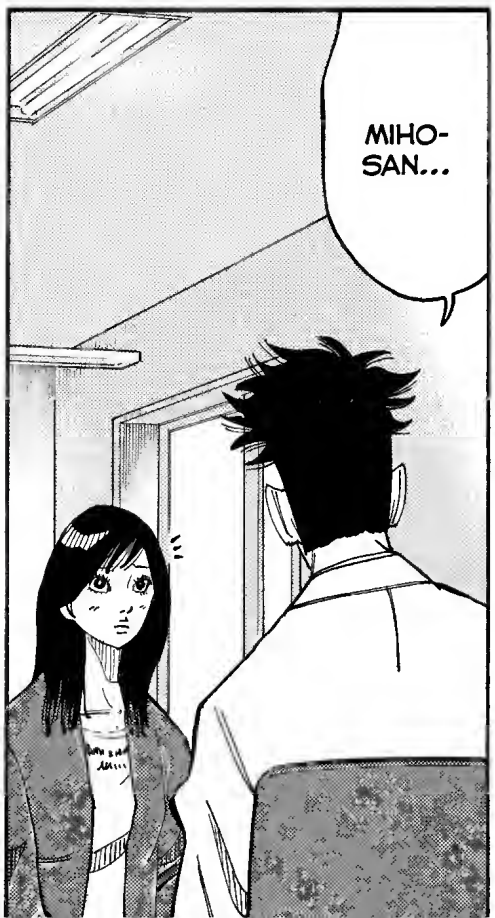
BUT, DEAR...
...
COME ON, NOW. WHAT'S DONE IS DONE.

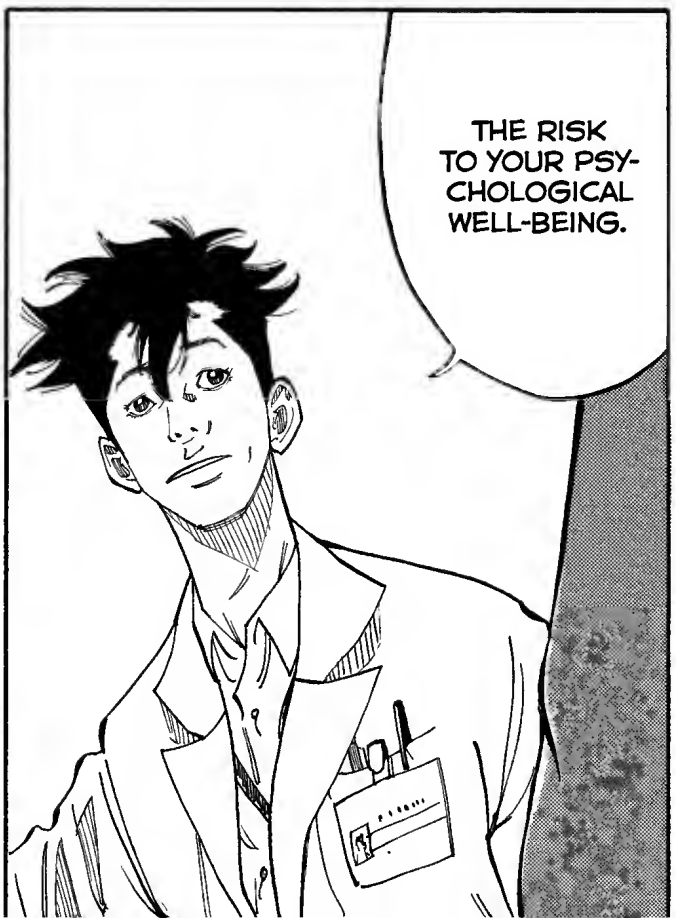
MIHO-SAN EXPERIENCES IRREGULAR MENSTRUATION.
IN CASES LIKE HERS...
...IT CAN BE DIFFICULT TO DETECT THE EARLY SIGNS OF PREGNANCY.
YOUR NEXT STEP IS GOING TO BE TO FILL OUT A LETTER OF CONSENT.
BE SURE TO BRING IT WITH YOU ON THE DAY OF THE PROCEDURE.
UM... DOCTOR ...
MY DAUGHTER SAYS SHE DOESN'T KNOW WHO THE FATHER IS...
WELL, GENERALLY, WE NEED THE FATHER'S CONSENT, TOO.
AND IF HE'S UNDERAGE...
...WE'LL NEED THE CONSENT OF HIS PARENTS, AS WELL.


PEEK
I UNDER-STAND, BUT...
...PLEASE, DOCTOR.
...
VERY WELL.
WELL, LAST, WE NEED TO RUN A PHYSICAL.
...
CAN I ASK YOU TWO TO WAIT IN THE LOBBY?


...SURE...


ABOUT MY EXPLANATION EARLIER...
...
THERE'S ONE VERY SERIOUS RISK I NEGLECTED TO MENTION.

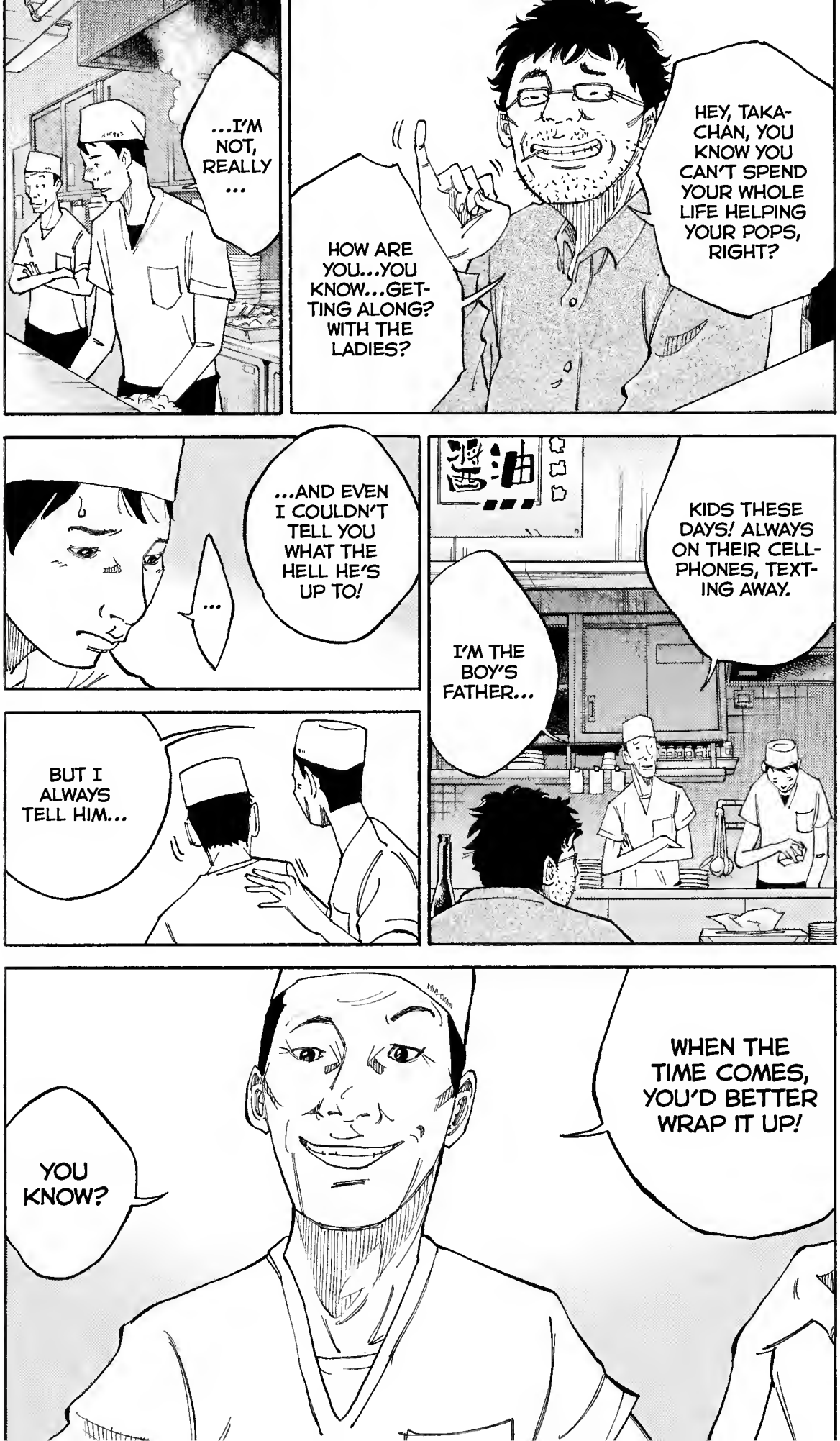

MIHO-SAN...


THE RISK TO YOUR PSY-CHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING.

ABORTION IS MURDER.

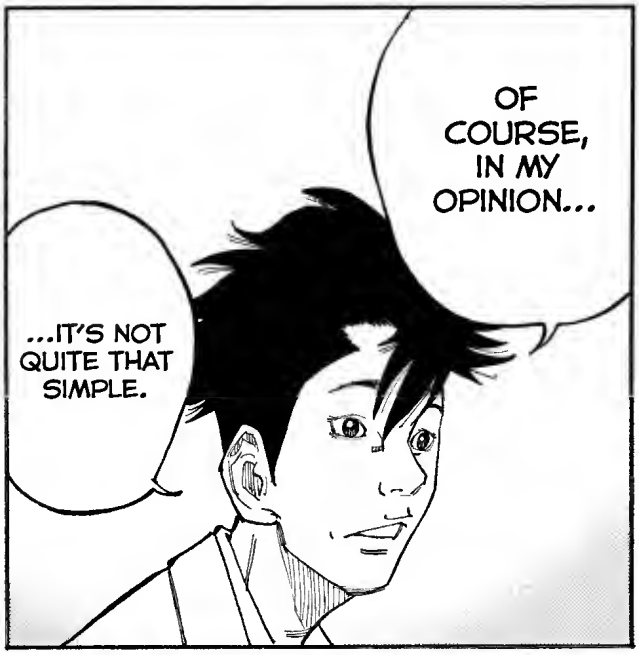
NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES I EAT 'EM, YOUR GYOUZA ALWAYS HIT THE SPOT.
BUT YOUR RAMEN ...
YOU KNOW, MISTER ...
IBA-CHAN
IB A-CH AN

...YOUR RAMEN SUCKS NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES I EAT IT!
DON'T ORDER IT, THEN!
CRIPES ...
BUT YOUR TAKA-CHAN HERE'S A FINE BOY, HUH?
COMES HOME FROM SCHOOL EVERY DAY AND HELPS OUT HIS OLD MAN!
...
WELL, YOU KNOW!
I CAN'T EXACTLY AFFORD TO HIRE HELP!
IF ONLY...
IF ONLY MAMA-SAN WERE STILL ALIVE, HUH?
...

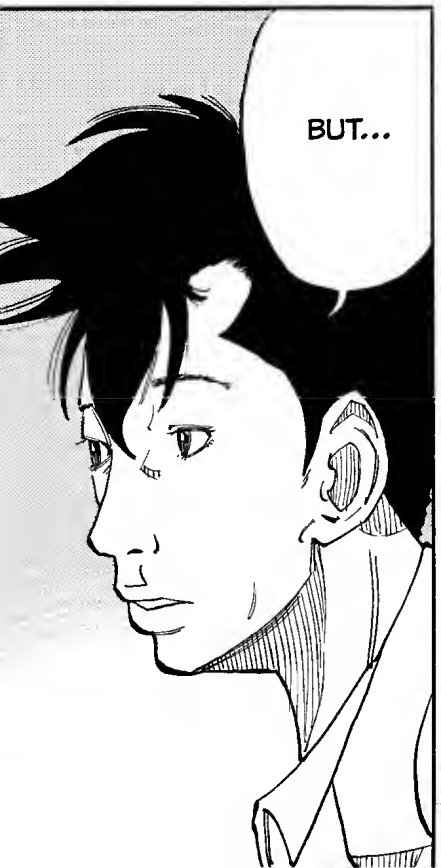

...I'M NOT, REALLY ...
HEY, TAKA-CHAN, YOU KNOW YOU CAN'T SPEND YOUR WHOLE LIFE HELPING YOUR POPS, RIGHT?
HOW ARE YOU...YOU KNOW...GET-TING ALONG? WITH THE LADIES?
...
...AND EVEN I COULDN'T TELL YOU WHAT THE HELL HE'S UP TO!
KIDS THESE DAYS! ALWAYS ON THEIR CELL-PHONES, TEXT-ING AWAY.
I'M THE BOY'S FATHER...
BUT I ALWAYS TELL HIM...
YOU KNOW?
WHEN THE TIME COMES, YOU'D BETTER WRAP IT UP!

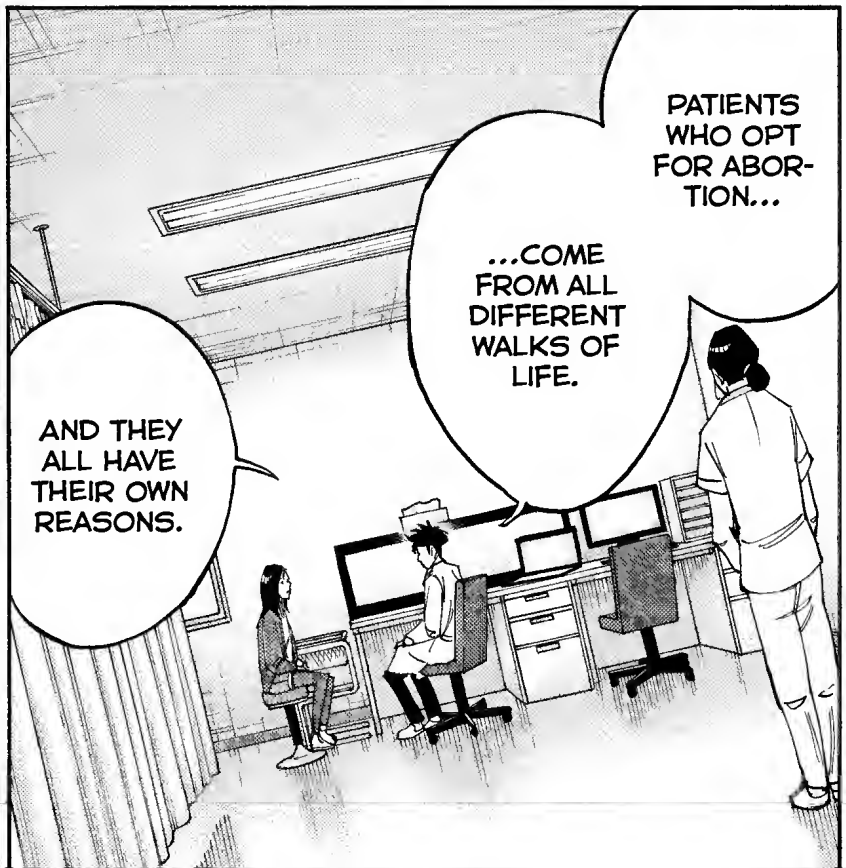
GAHH HAH HAH! YOU GOT THAT RIGHT!
DAD...
WHOA! WHAT THE HELL, TAKASHI?
DID I PISS YOU OFF?
...
DAD!!
I NEED TO TALK TO YOU.
...
-CHAN
A-
CH
AN

ABORTION IS MURDER.

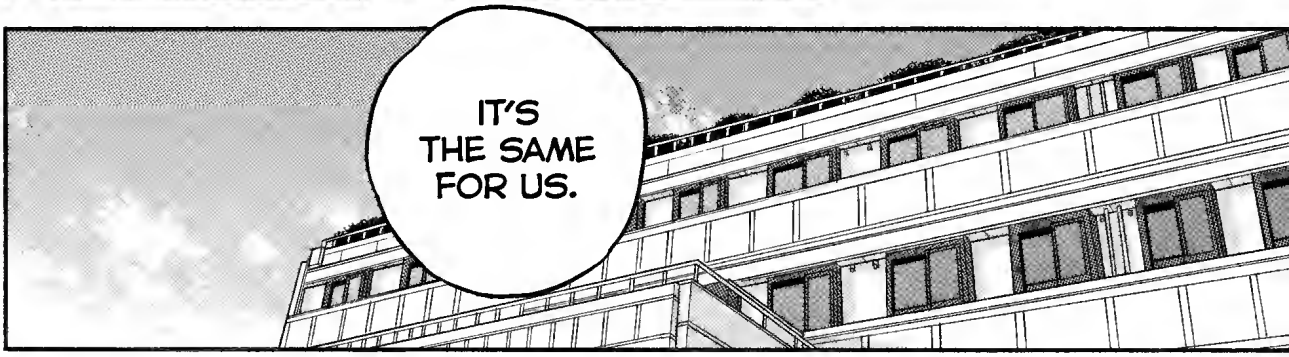

OF COURSE, IN MY OPINION...
...IT'S NOT QUITE THAT SIMPLE.

THERE ARE...
...LOTS OF PEOPLE OUT THERE WHO WILL TELL YOU THAT.

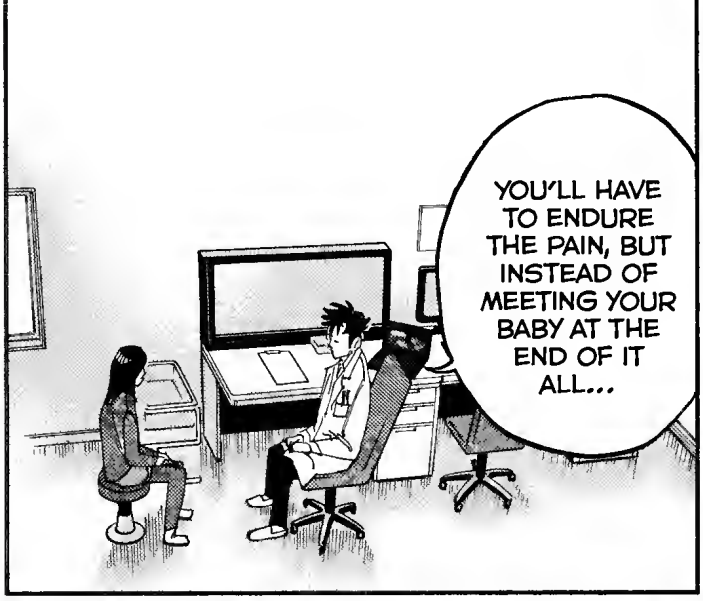

BUT...

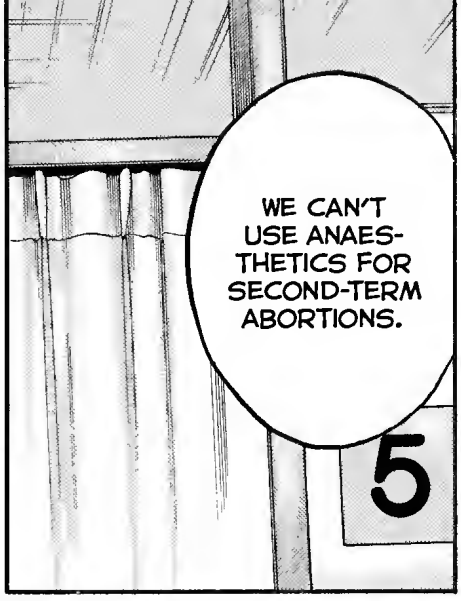

PATIENTS WHO OPT FOR ABORTION...
...COME FROM ALL DIFFERENT WALKS OF LIFE.
AND THEY ALL HAVE THEIR OWN REASONS.

I'VE NEVER IN MY LIFE MET A WOMAN WHO WAS HAPPY TO HAVE AN ABORTION.
...

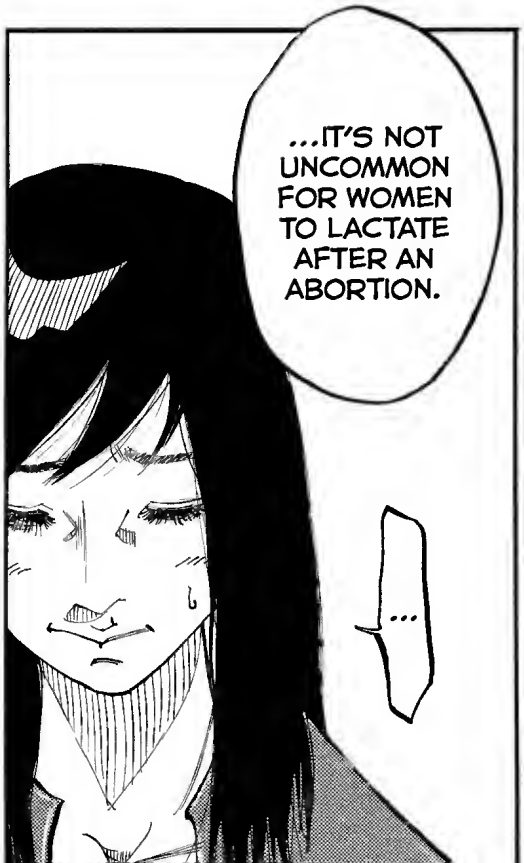

IT'S THE SAME FOR US.

I'VE NEVER MET AN OBSTE-TRICIAN WHO WAS HAPPY TO PERFORM ONE.


YOU'LL HAVE TO ENDURE THE PAIN, BUT INSTEAD OF MEETING YOUR BABY AT THE END OF IT ALL...

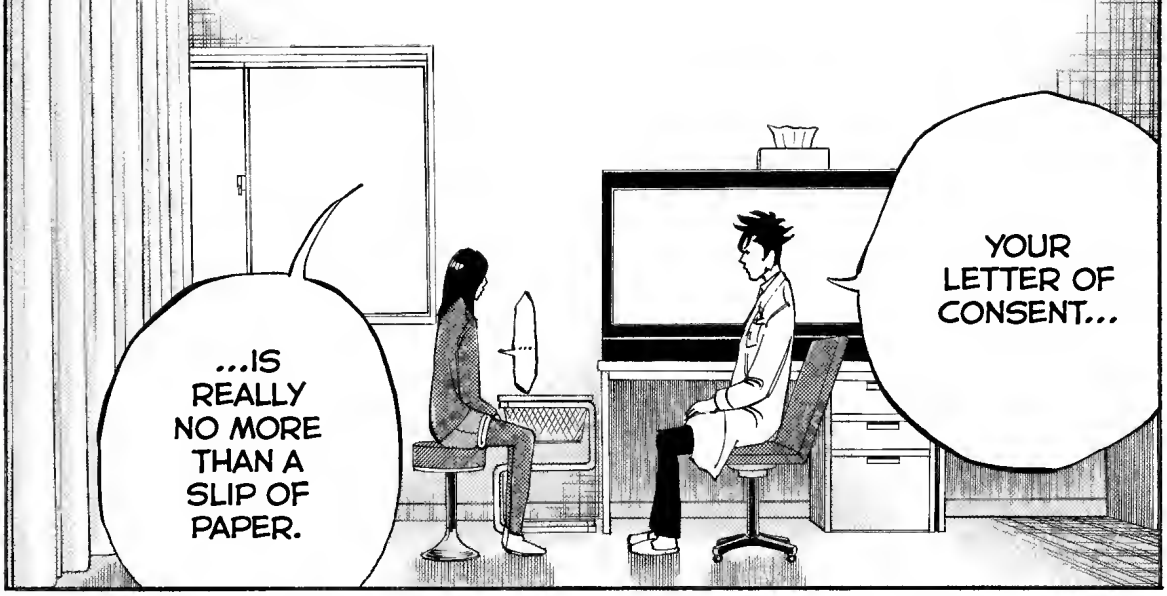

WE CAN'T USE ANAES-THETICS FOR SECOND-TERM ABORTIONS.
5

...IT'S ALL JUST TO END ITS LIFE.


...IT'S NOT UNCOMMON FOR WOMEN TO LACTATE AFTER AN ABORTION.
...

BUT IT DOESN'T STOP THERE.

JUST AS WITH CHILD-BIRTH...

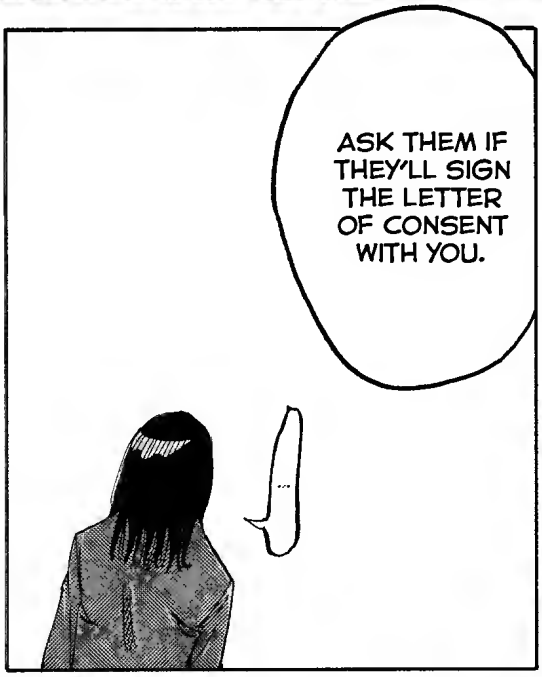

YOUR LETTER OF CONSENT...
...IS REALLY NO MORE THAN A SLIP OF PAPER.

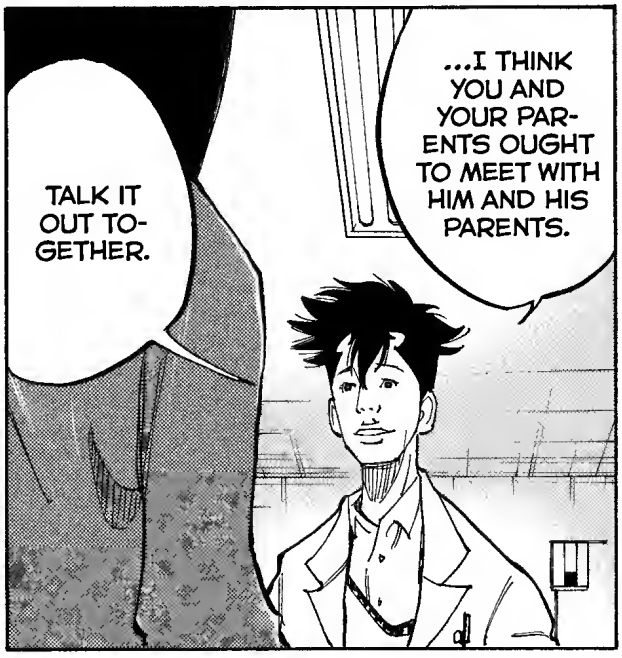
BUT THERE'S A SPACE FOR YOUR BABY'S FATHER'S SIGNATURE.
IF IT'S BLANK...

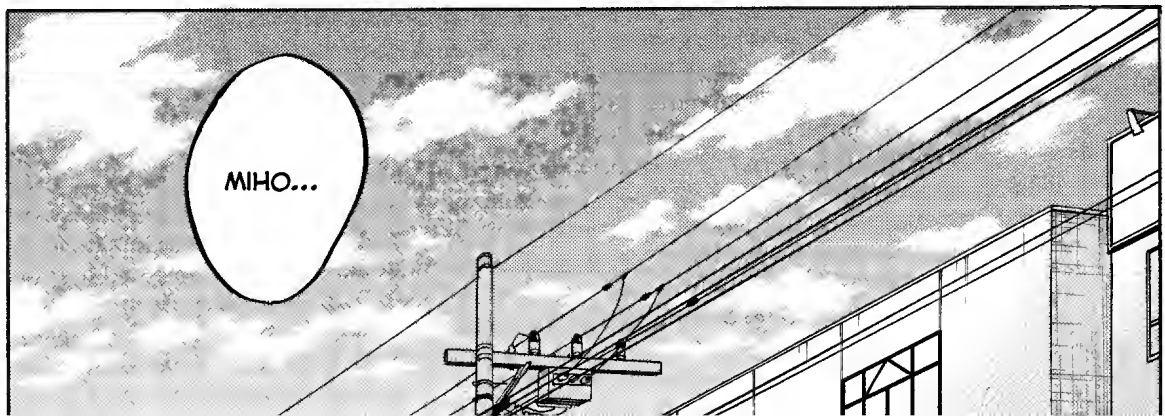
IF THE FATHER HAPPENED TO BE, SAY...

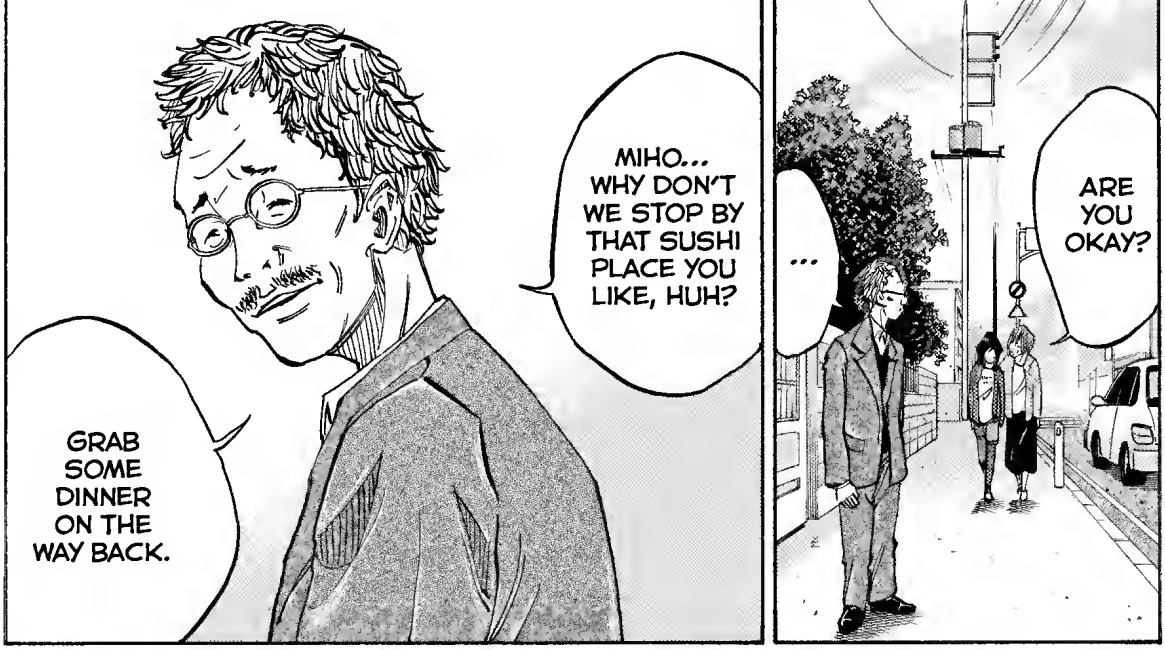
...THAT MEANS THERE WILL BE NO ONE TO HELP YOU BEAR THE BURDEN.
YOU'LL BE ALL ALONE.

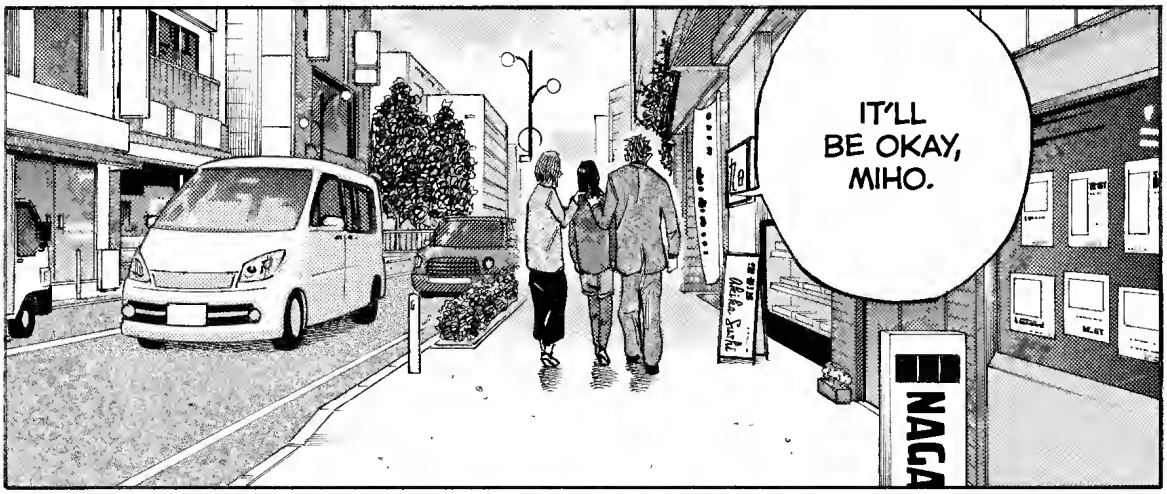
...THAT BOY WHO WAS WAITING OUTSIDE THE HOSPITAL FOR YOU YESTERDAY...


ASK THEM IF THEY'LL SIGN THE LETTER OF CONSENT WITH YOU.
...


...I THINK YOU AND YOUR PARENTS OUGHT TO MEET WITH HIM AND HIS PARENTS.
TALK IT OUT TOGETHER.

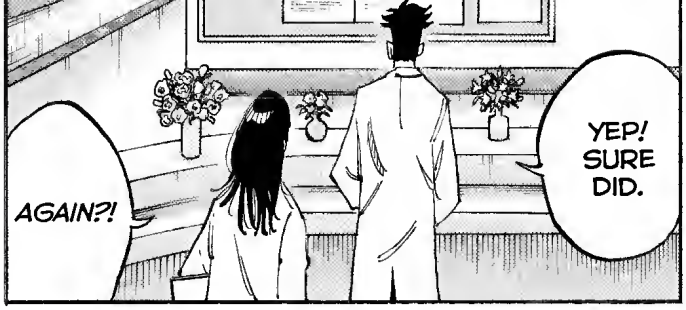

MIHO...

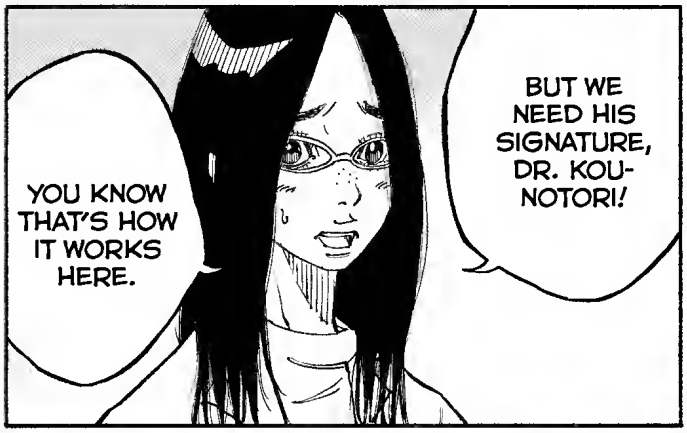

MIHO... WHY DON'T WE STOP BY THAT SUSHI PLACE YOU LIKE, HUH?
GRAB SOME DINNER ON THE WAY BACK.
...
ARE YOU OKAY?

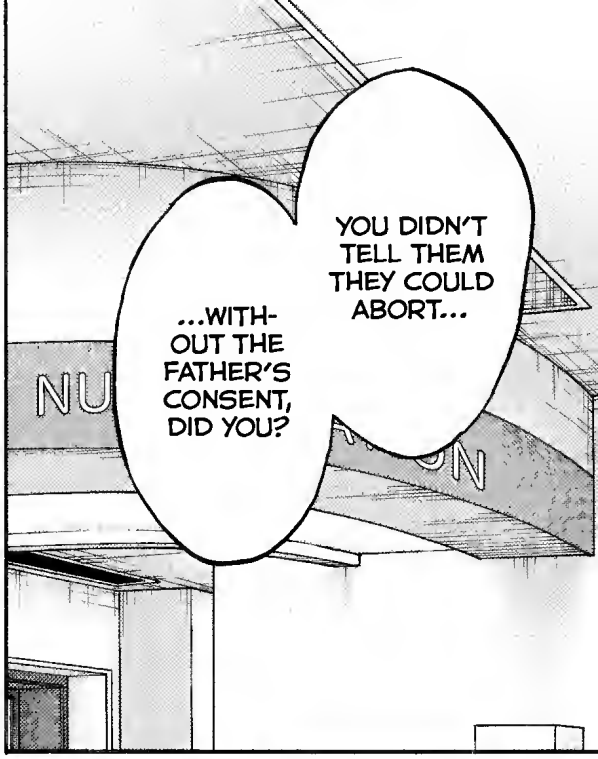

IT'LL BE OKAY, MIHO.

SO SORRY! THANKS FOR YOUR BUSI-NESS!
RAMEN IBA-CHAN
OH, I'M SORRY...
...SOME URGENT BUSINESS HAS COME UP, SO WE AREN'T DELIVERING TODAY.
CLOSE

LET'S GO.
HUH? GO WHERE...?
CLACK
ガチャ
CRIPES...
...
TO THE MOTHER'S HOUSE, OF COURSE!
...
DUMB-ASS BOY.
DR. KOUNO-TORI!





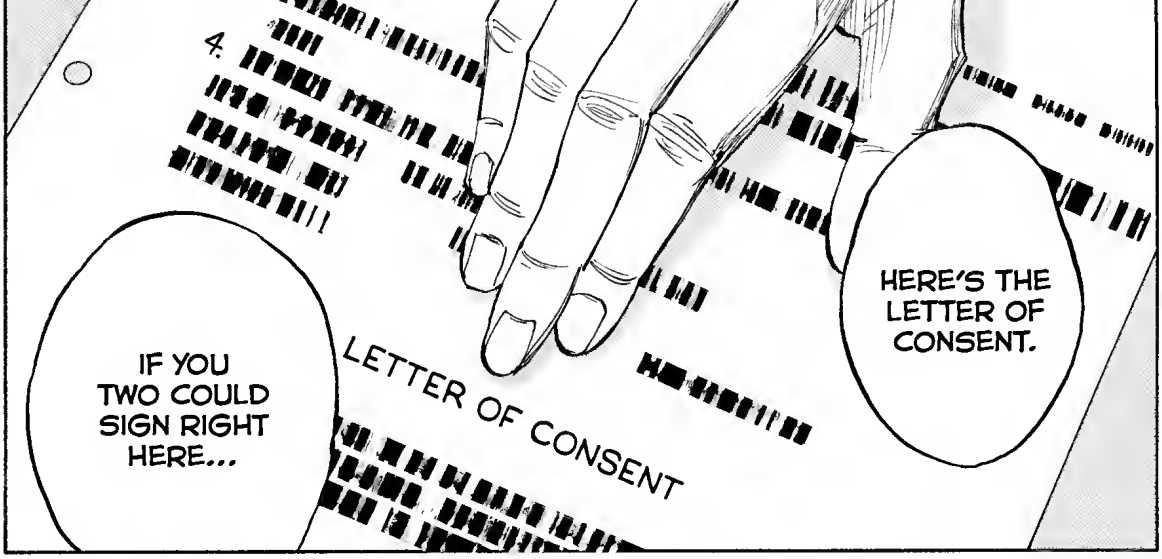


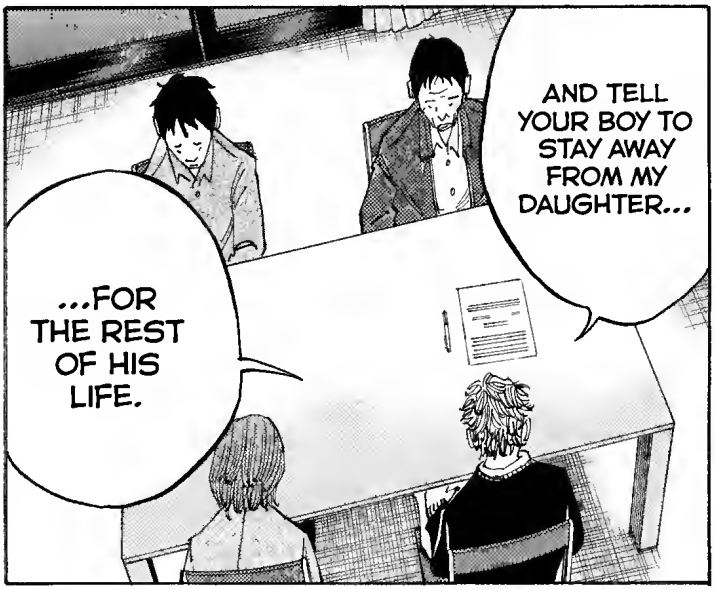
TEENAGE PREGNANCY (2) / END

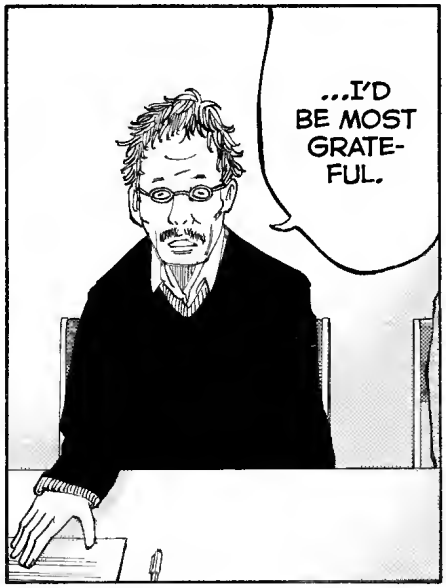
NOMURA
I HAVE TO ADMIT, WHEN SHE TOLD US SHE DIDN'T KNOW THE FATHER...
SO, THAT'S WHAT HAP-PENED...
...I THOUGHT IT WAS A LITTLE STRANGE.
...
MIHO.
GO TO YOUR ROOM FOR NOW.
I DON'T SUPPOSE YOU TWO...
...
ガチャ CLUNK
MIHO.

...CAME HERE TO GET DOWN ON YOUR HANDS AND KNEES AND APOLOGIZE?

SHE'S GOING TO THE HOSPITAL IN TWO DAYS.
I'M JOK-ING.
DEAR ...
I SEE...
SHE'S DECIDED TO HAVE AN ABORTION, SEE.
...
THAT WON'T BE NECESSARY.
LOOK, SEND ME THE BILL.
BUT YOU'VE GOT GOOD TIMING!
I'LL COVER ALL OF HER MEDICAL EXPENSES.


4.
LETTER OF CONSENT
IF YOU TWO COULD SIGN RIGHT HERE...
HERE'S THE LETTER OF CONSENT.

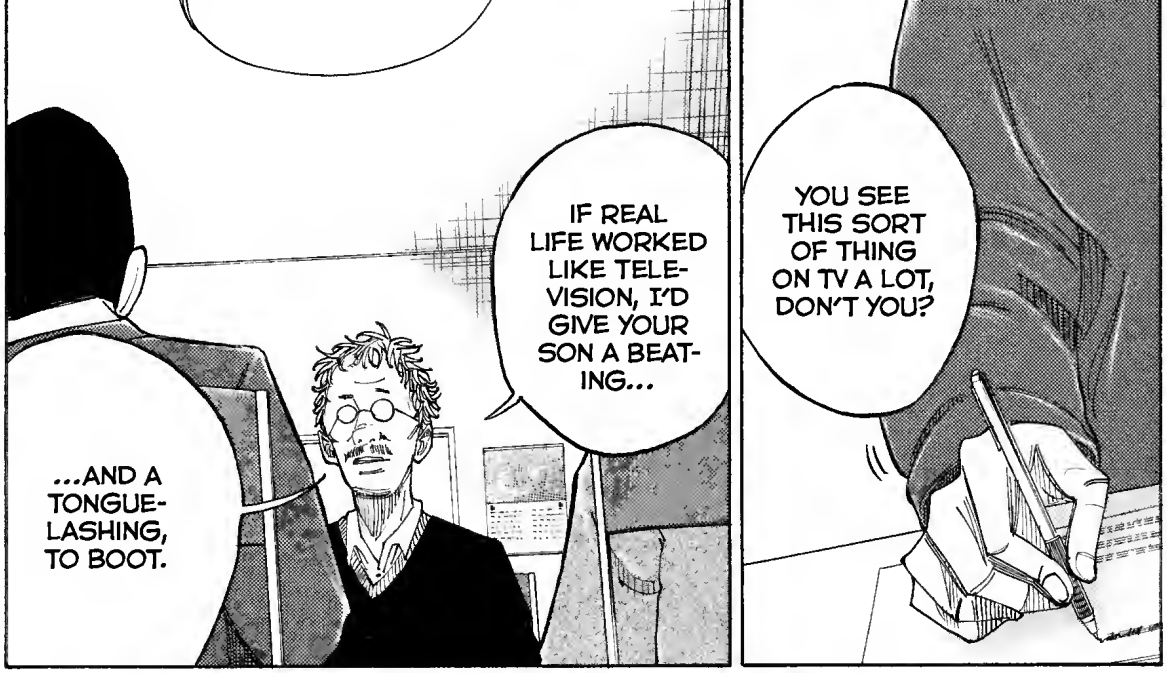

AND TELL YOUR BOY TO STAY AWAY FROM MY DAUGHTER...
...FOR THE REST OF HIS LIFE.

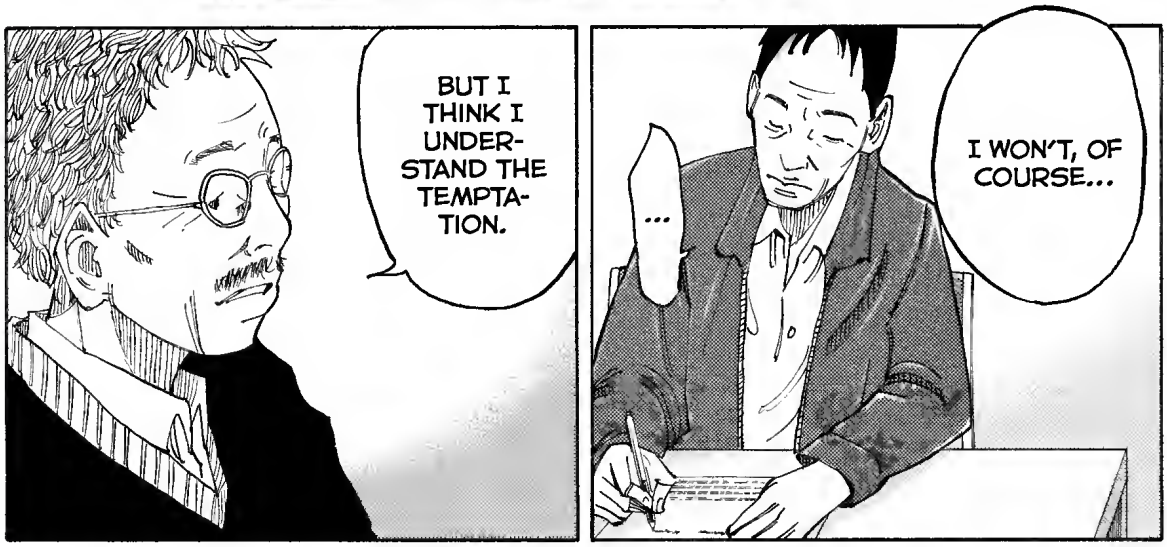

...I'D BE MOST GRATE-FUL.

I UNDER-STAND.

...
...

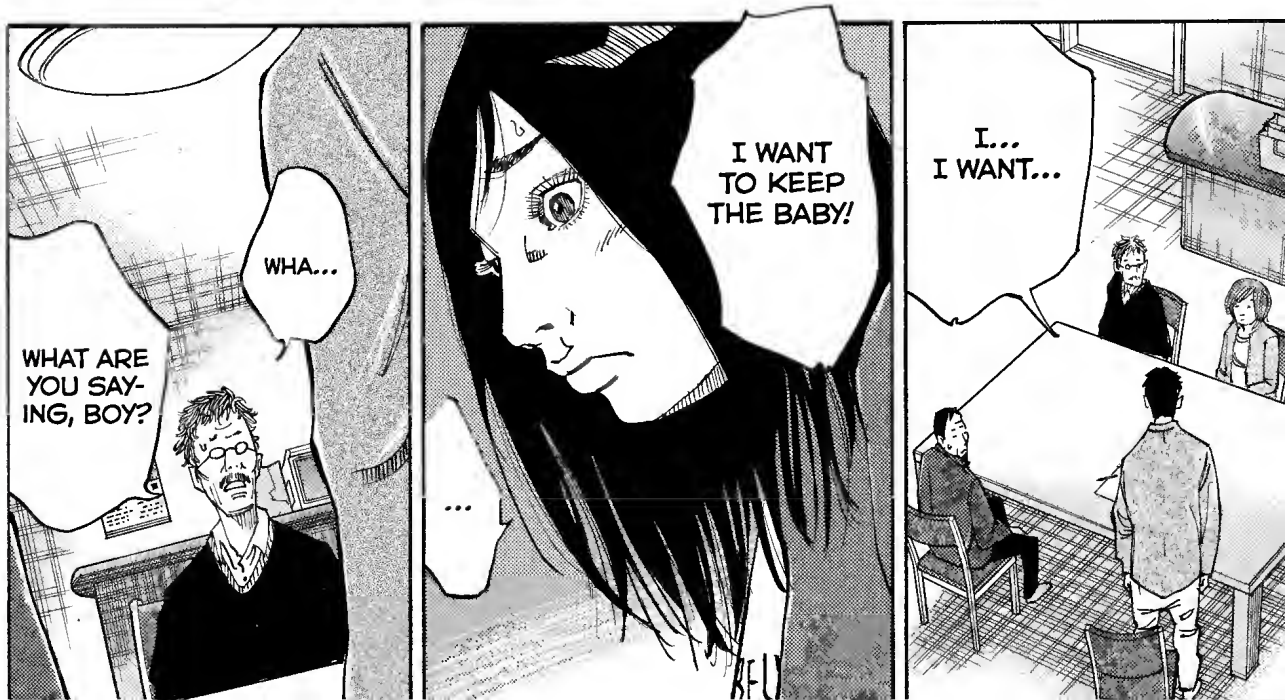
カチッ
click


...AND A TONGUE-LASHING, TO BOOT.
IF REAL LIFE WORKED LIKE TELE-VISION, I'D GIVE YOUR SON A BEAT-ING...
YOU SEE THIS SORT OF THING ON TV A LOT, DON'T YOU?


BUT I THINK I UNDER-STAND THE TEMPTA-TION.
...
I WON'T, OF COURSE...

TAKASHI.
I'LL...
CLANK
HEY.
COME ON, IT'S YOUR TURN TO SIGN.

I'LL DROP OUT OF SCHOOL AND GET A JOB!!
SO...
?!
...PLEASE, LET ME MARRY MIHO-SAN!


WHA...
WHAT ARE YOU SAY-ING, BOY?
I WANT TO KEEP THE BABY!
...
I... I WANT...

YANK
?!

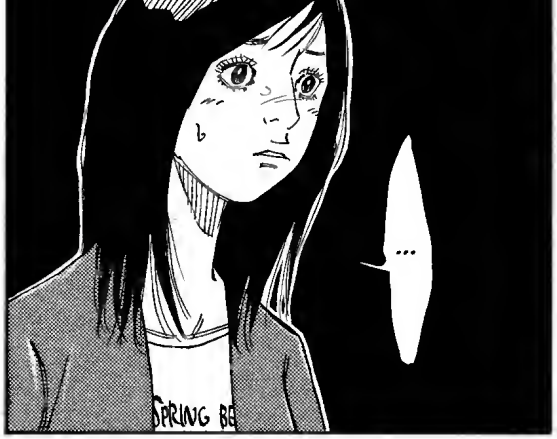
WHAT WAS THAT?
ALL RIGHT, YOU LITTLE SHIT.

...
...OR KILL IT!

...WHETHER SHE SHOULD HAVE THE BABY...
YOU DON'T GET TO DECIDE...

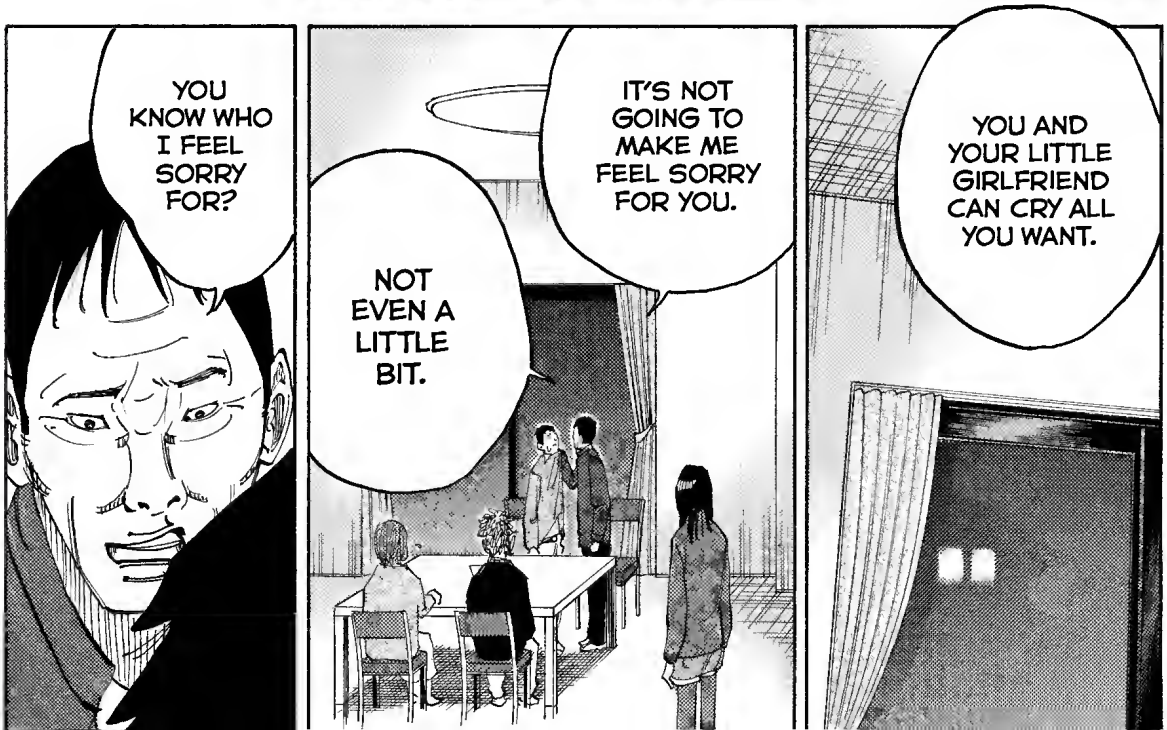
...
THAT'S FOR HER PARENTS...
...AND FOR ME TO DECIDE!
NO!
KRRCK
YOU GOT THAT? NOW SIGN YOUR NAME!!
THAT'S WHY THE DOCTORS MAKE US PARENTS SIGN, ISN'T IT?!
EXPLANATION
SIGN IT!
PLEASE, STOP IT!
...

GO TO YOUR ROOM.
MIHO...
TAKASHI... ALWAYS USED TO TELL ME...
...THAT HIS MOTHER DIED WHEN HE WAS JUST A BABY.
HIS FATHER RAN THE RESTAURANT ALL BY HIMSELF TO RAISE HIM.
SO ONCE HE GRADUATES...
...HE'S GOING TO LEARN ALL ABOUT COOKING...
...AND WORK TOGETHER WITH HIS FATHER TO MAKE THE RESTAURANT A BIG SUCCESS!
THAT'S HIS DREAM...
...

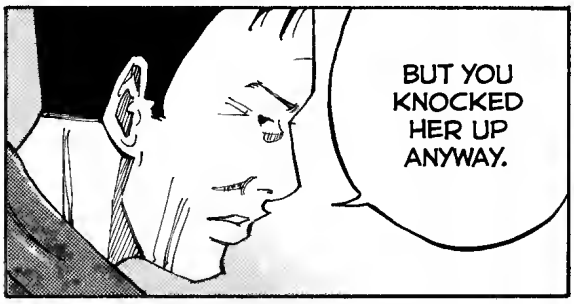

...

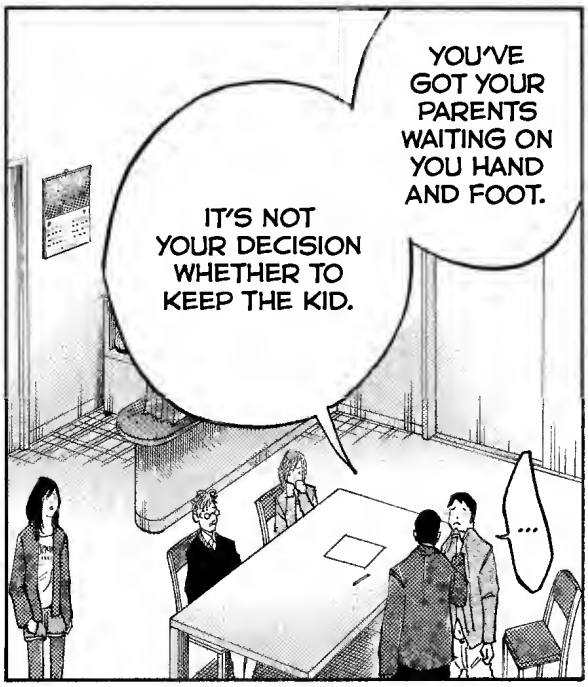
SO WHAT?

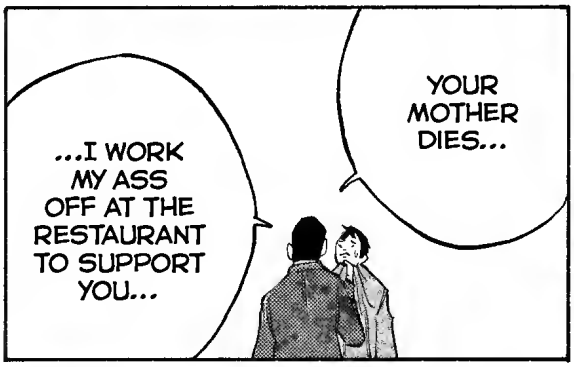
LISTEN HERE, TAKASHI.
...


YOU KNOW WHO I FEEL SORRY FOR?
NOT EVEN A LITTLE BIT.
IT'S NOT GOING TO MAKE ME FEEL SORRY FOR YOU.
YOU AND YOUR LITTLE GIRLFRIEND CAN CRY ALL YOU WANT.

THAT LITTLE BABY OF HERS.
...


BUT YOU KNOCKED HER UP ANYWAY.

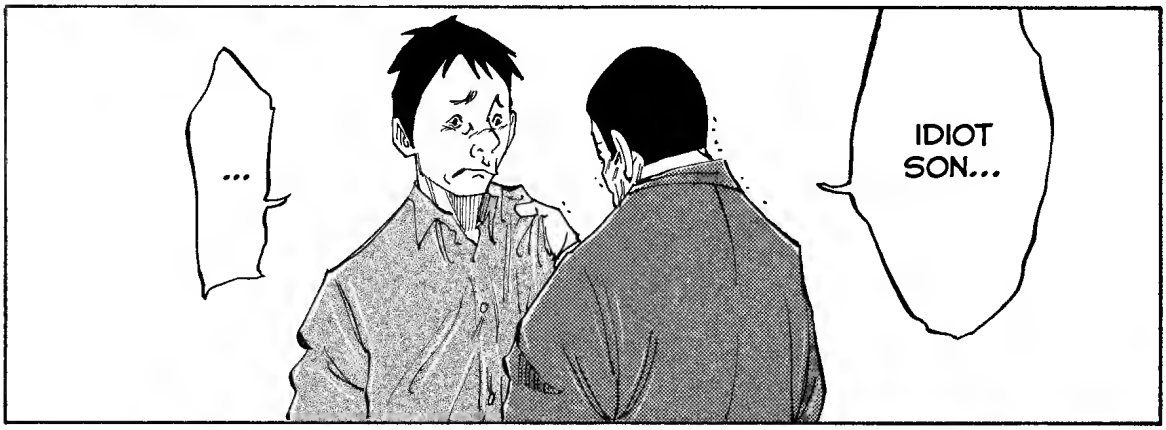

YOU'VE GOT YOUR PARENTS WAITING ON YOU HAND AND FOOT.
IT'S NOT YOUR DECISION WHETHER TO KEEP THE KID.
...

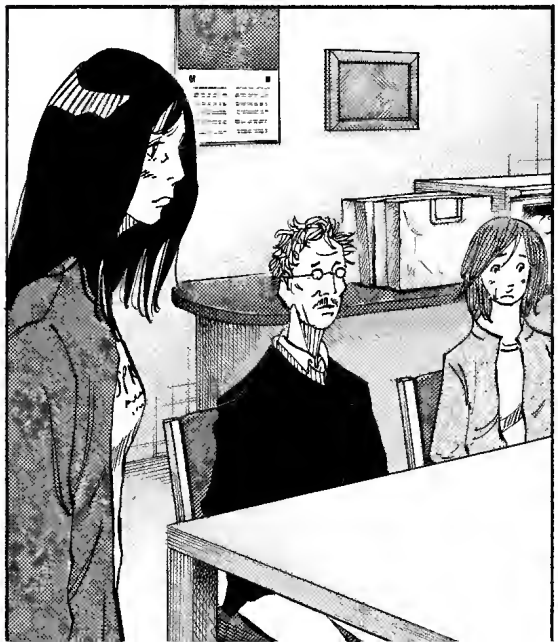

YOUR MOTHER DIES...
...I WORK MY ASS OFF AT THE RESTAURANT TO SUPPORT YOU...

IF YOU WANTED TO HELP ME...

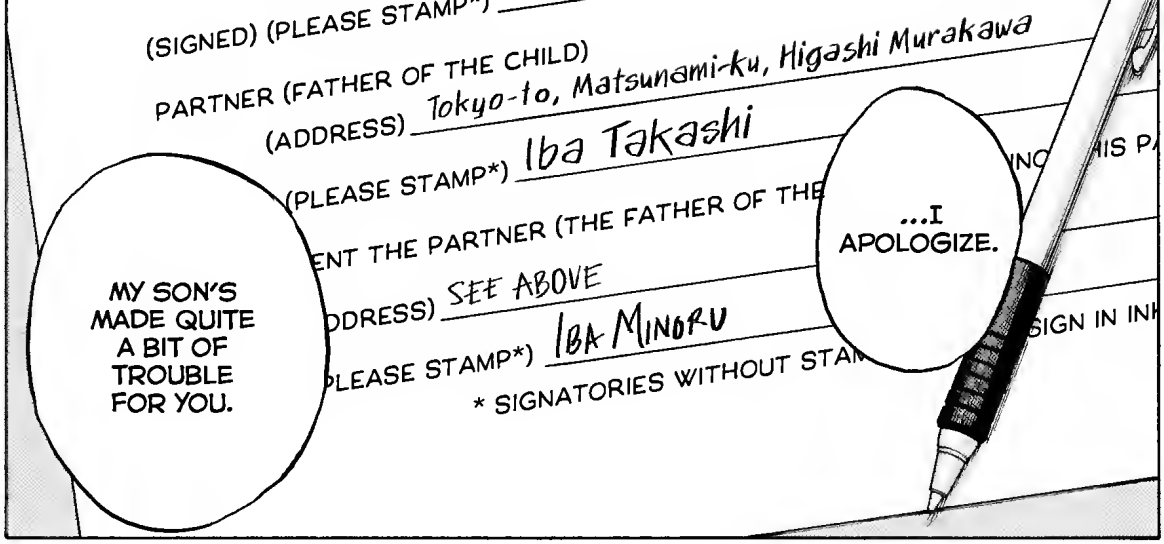
...AND NOW *YOU'RE* GONNA HELP ME, TAKASHI?
DON'T MAKE ME LAUGH!

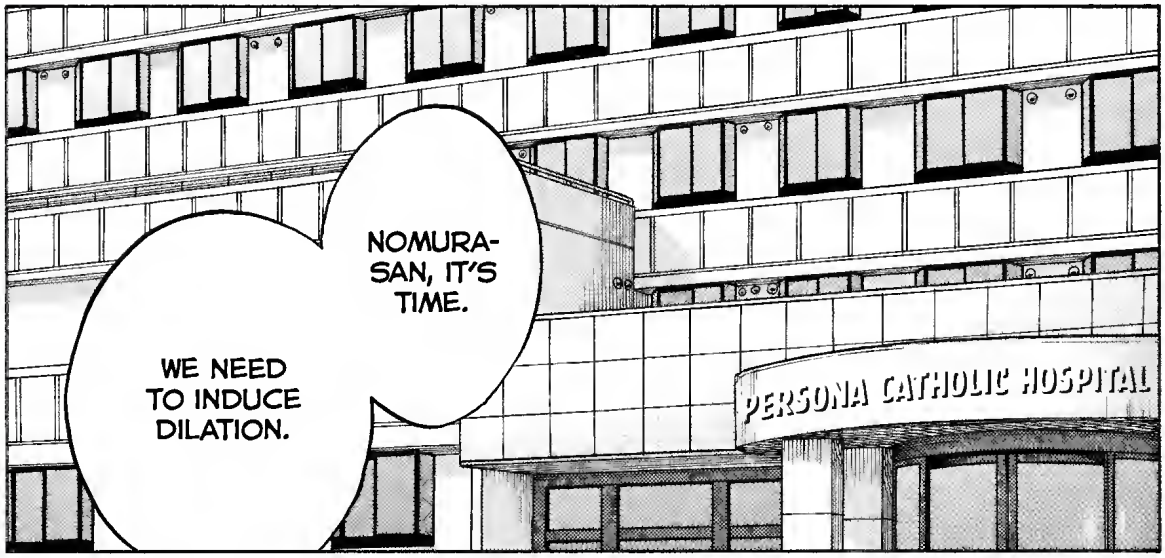
...WHY DO I HAVE TO SIGN THIS FORM?!

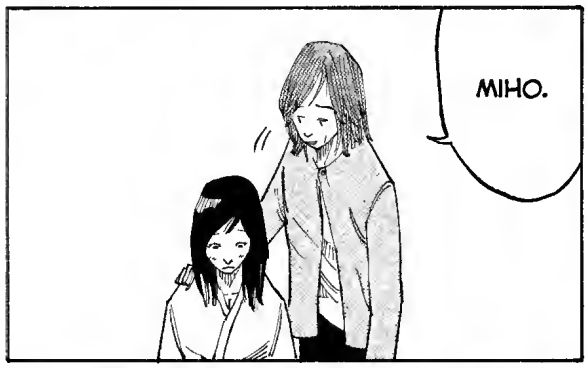

IDIOT SON...
...



SNIFF
...

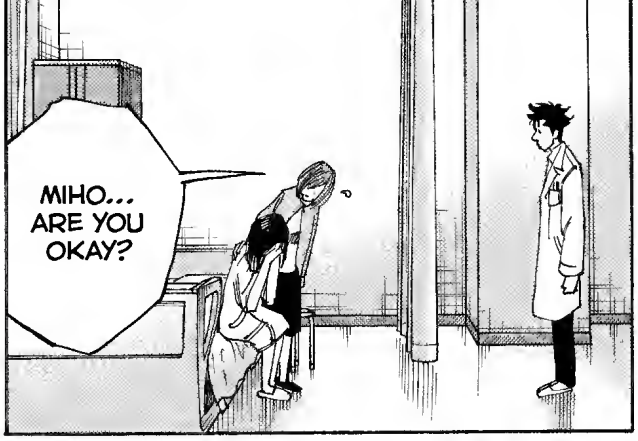

(SIGNED) (PLEASE STAMP*)
PARTNER (FATHER OF THE CHILD)
(ADDRESS) Tokyo-to, Matsunami-ku, Higashi Murakawa
(PLEASE STAMP*) Iba Takashi
ENT THE PARTNER (THE FATHER OF THE
DDRESS) SEE ABOVE
LEASE STAMP*) IBA MINORU
* SIGNATORIES WITHOUT STA
MY SON'S MADE QUITE A BIT OF TROUBLE FOR YOU.
...I APOLOGIZE.

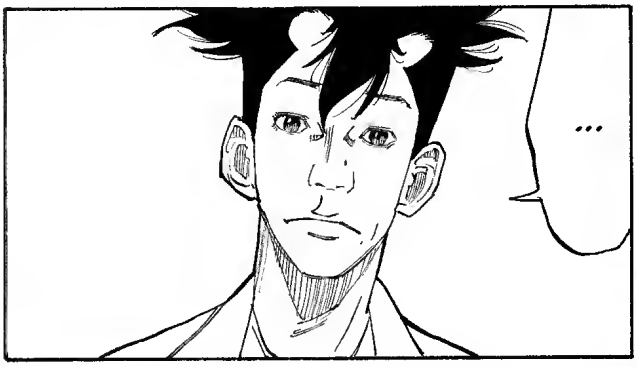

NOMURA-SAN, IT'S TIME.
WE NEED TO INDUCE DILATION.
PERSONA CATHOLIC HOSPITAL

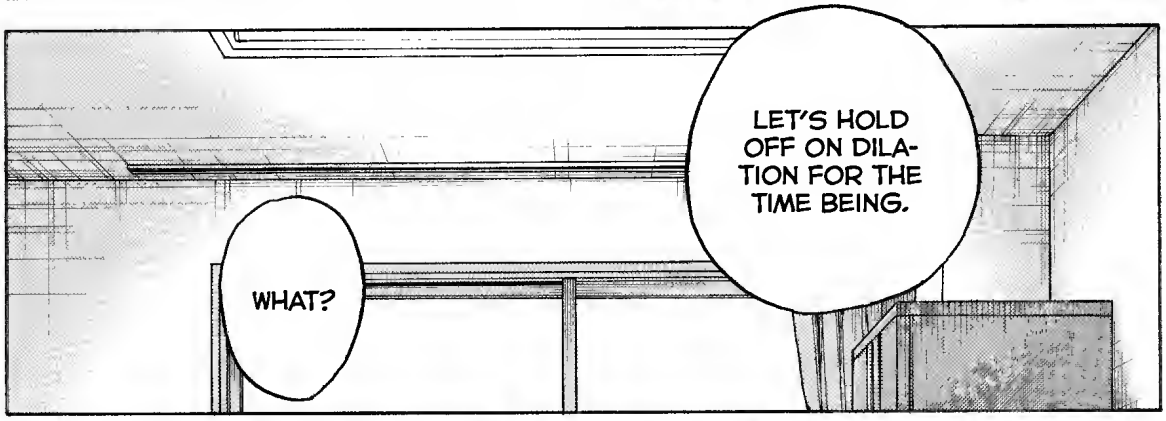

MIHO.

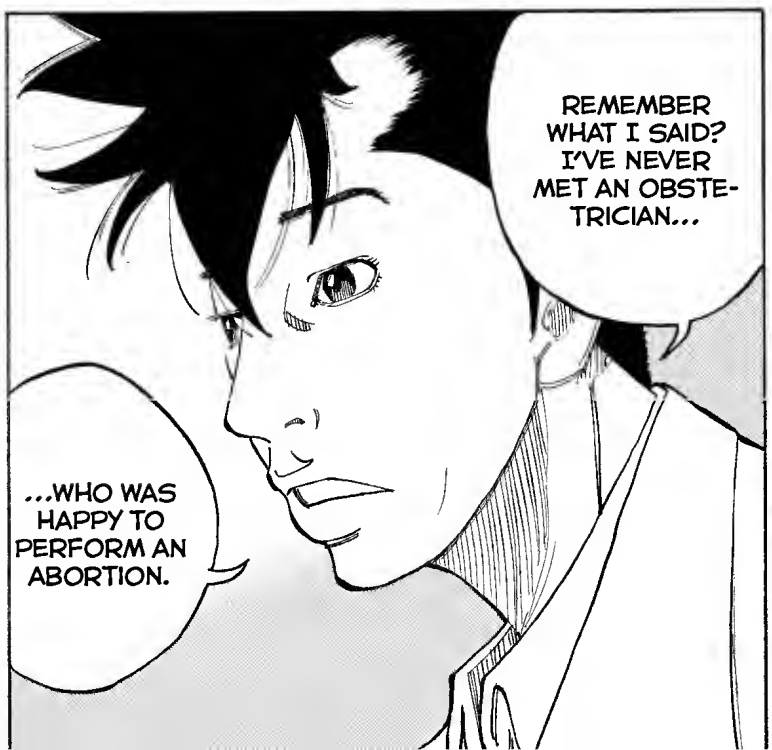
...
OKAY.

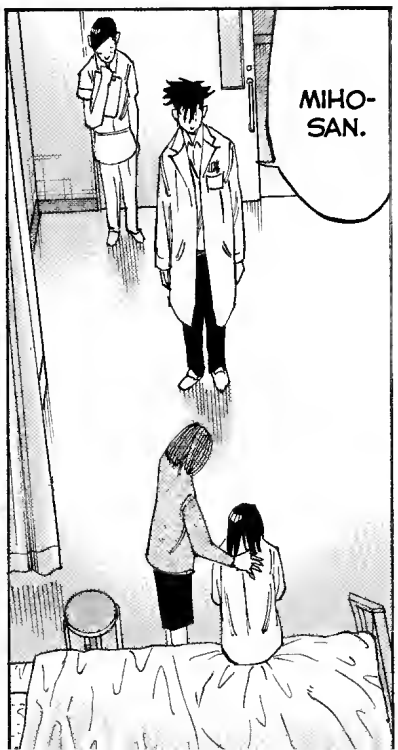
WE'LL NEED TO DO A PELVIC EXAM. COME ALONG, PLEASE.
...OH... RIGHT...

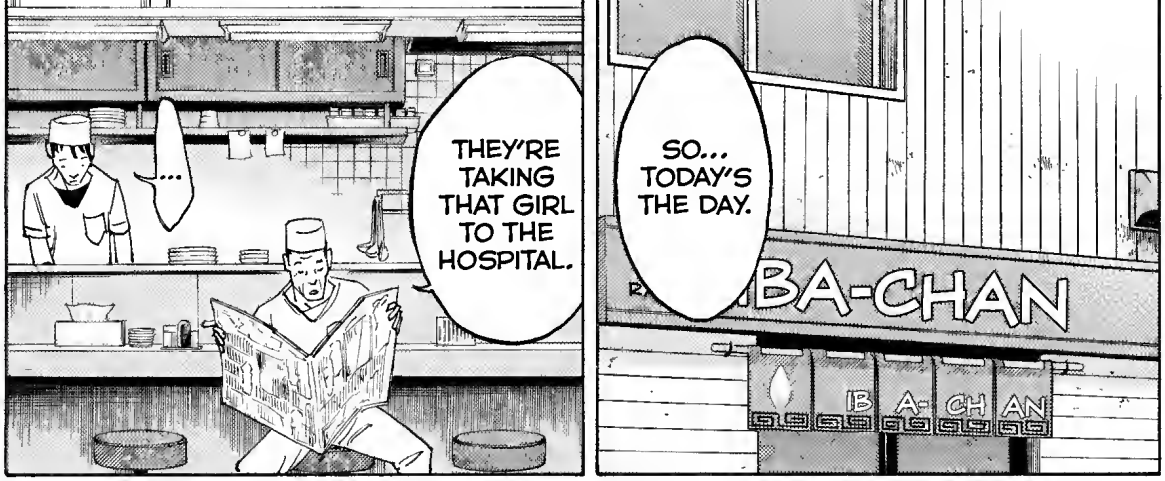

MIHO... ARE YOU OKAY?

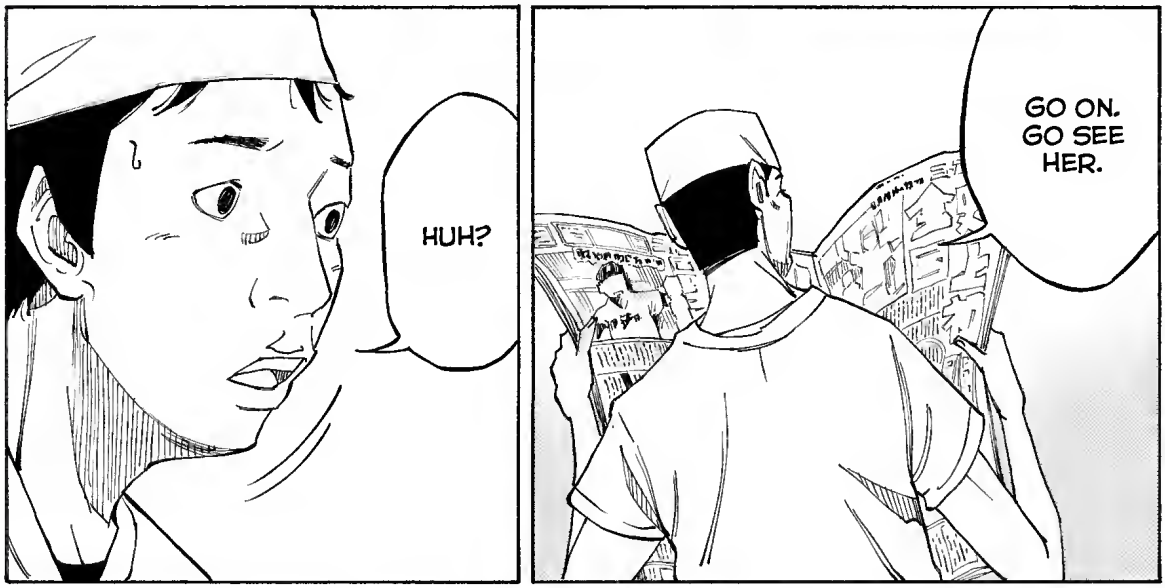

...


LET'S HOLD OFF ON DILATION FOR THE TIME BEING.
WHAT?

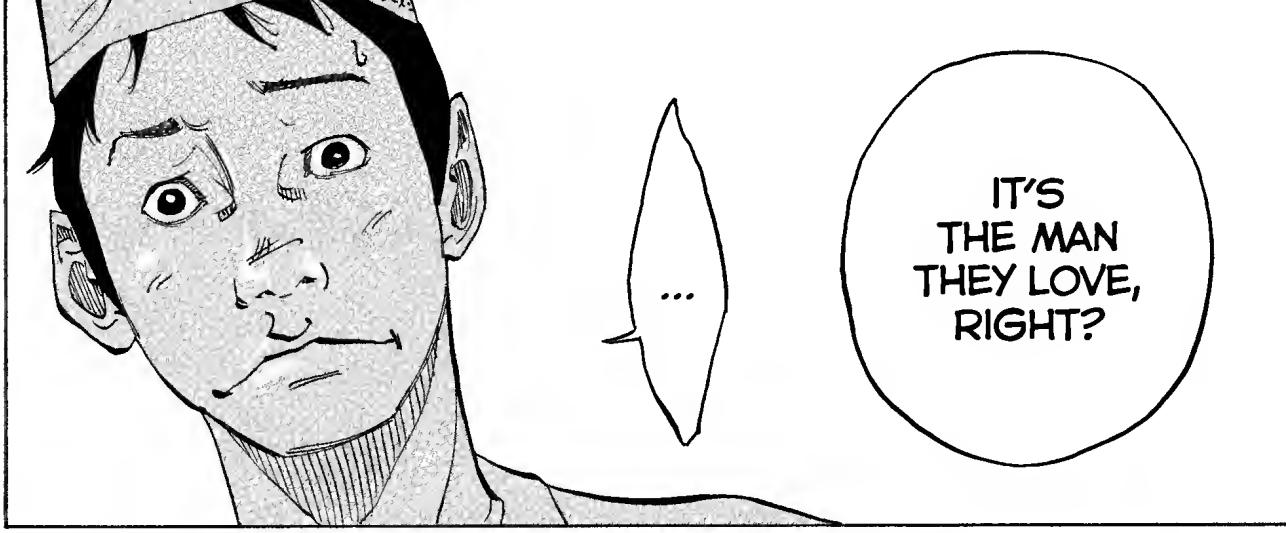

REMEMBER WHAT I SAID? I'VE NEVER MET AN OBSTETRICIAN...
...WHO WAS HAPPY TO PERFORM AN ABORTION.

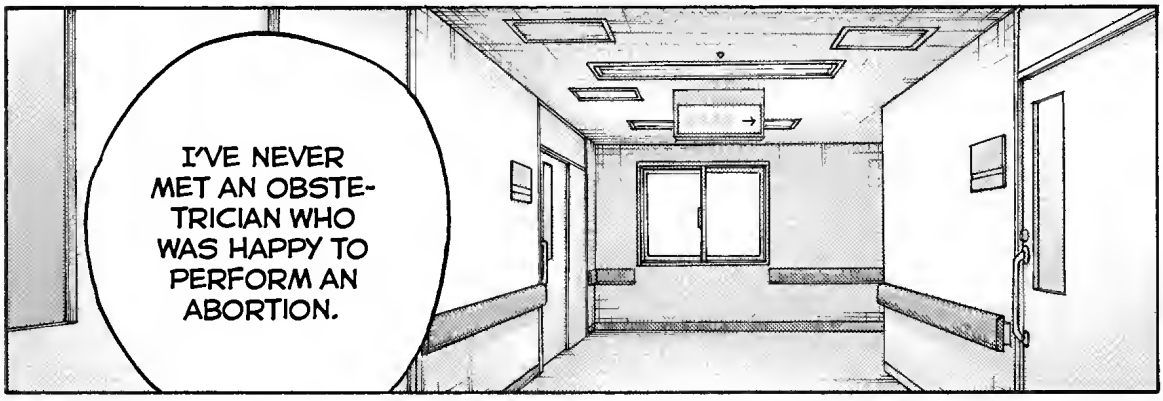

MIHO-SAN.

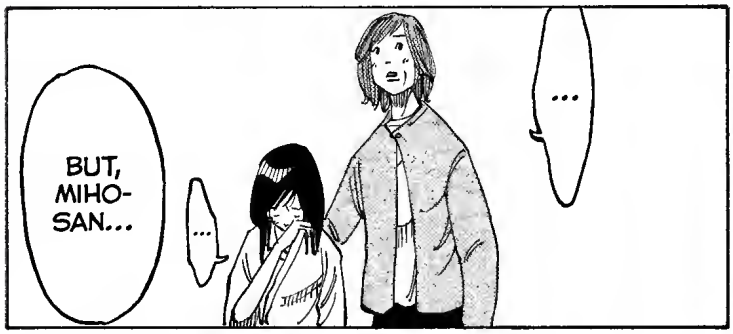

...
THEY'RE TAKING THAT GIRL TO THE HOSPITAL.
SO... TODAY'S THE DAY.
BA-CHAN
IB A- CH AN


HUH?
GO ON. GO SEE HER.

...IN TIMES LIKE THIS, YOU KNOW WHO THEY WANT BY THEIR SIDE?
...THE FUNNY THING ABOUT WOMEN IS...
IT'S NOT THEIR PARENTS.
I'M SURE SHE COULD USE THE SUPPORT.
WELL, YOU KNOW. SHE MUST BE SCARED RIGHT NOW.

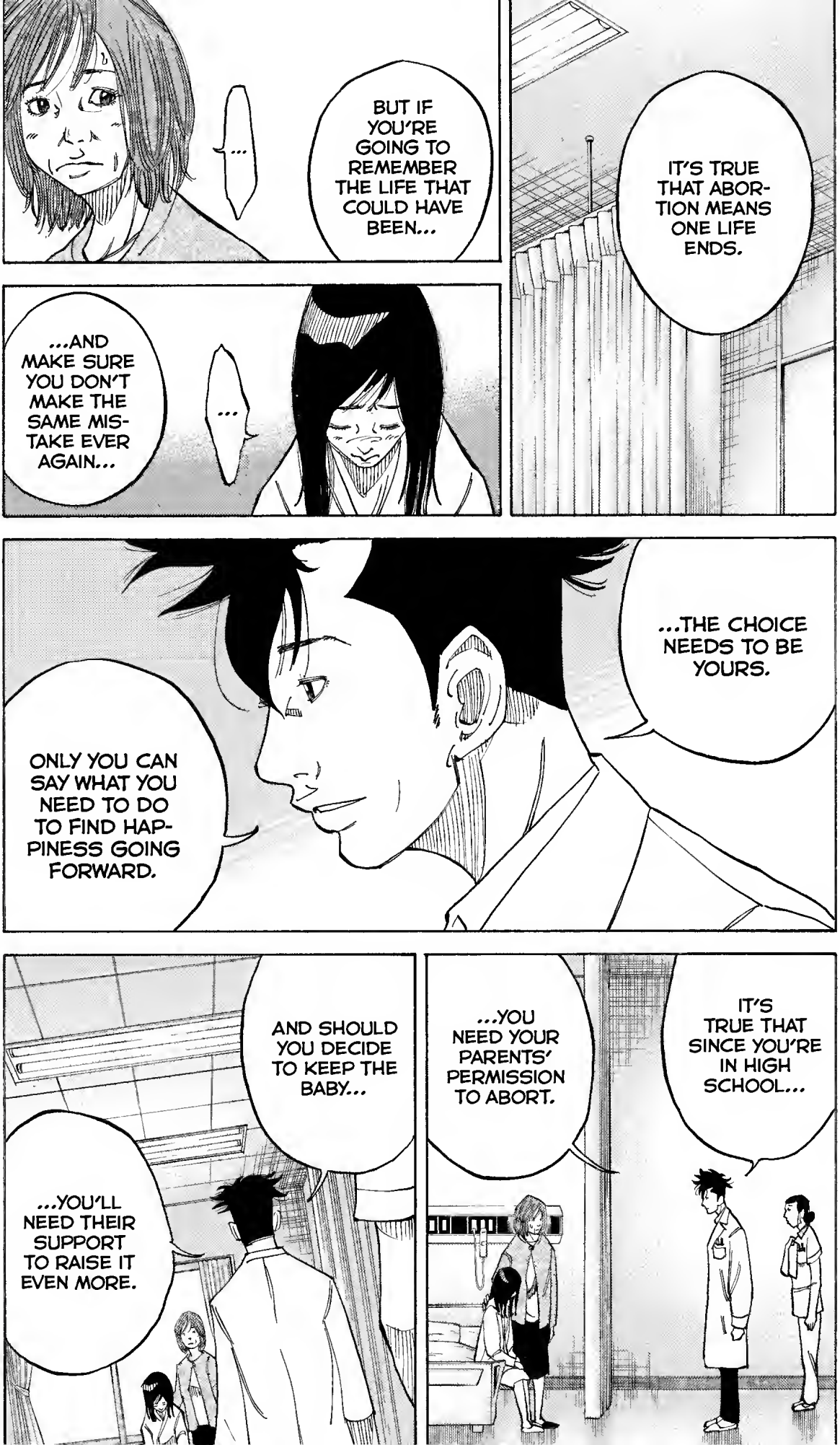

IT'S THE MAN THEY LOVE, RIGHT?
...


I'VE NEVER MET AN OBSTE-TRICIAN WHO WAS HAPPY TO PERFORM AN ABORTION.


BUT, MIHO-SAN...
...
...

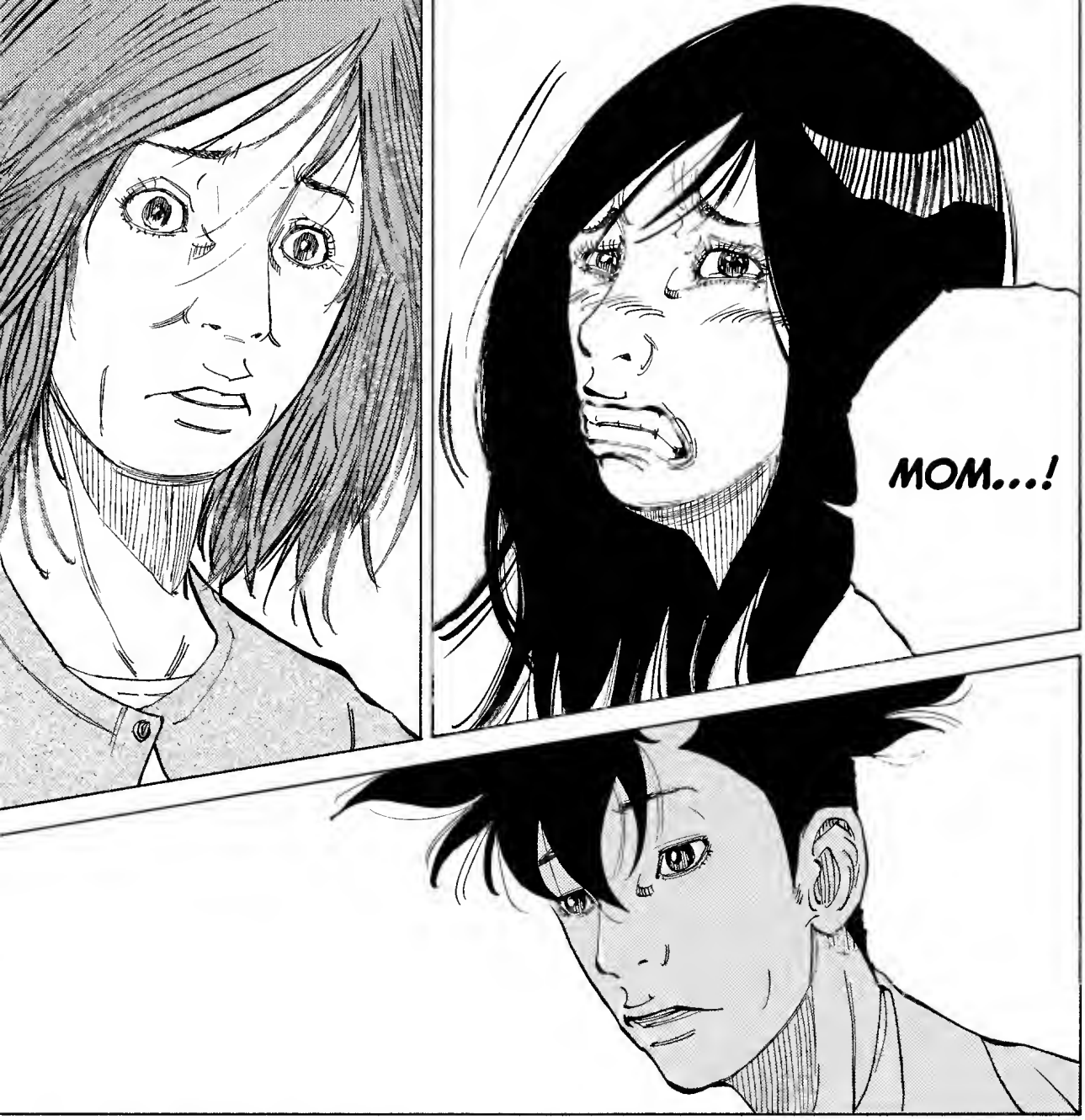
PARTIC-ULARLY NOT FOR A PATIENT...
...WHOSE MIND ISN'T QUITE MADE UP.

ABORTION IS A CHOICE WHICH, ULTI-MATELY...
...NO ONE CAN MAKE FOR THE MOTHER.


IT'S TRUE THAT ABORTION MEANS ONE LIFE ENDS.
BUT IF YOU'RE GOING TO REMEMBER THE LIFE THAT COULD HAVE BEEN...
...
...AND MAKE SURE YOU DON'T MAKE THE SAME MISTAKE EVER AGAIN...
...
...THE CHOICE NEEDS TO BE YOURS.
ONLY YOU CAN SAY WHAT YOU NEED TO DO TO FIND HAPPINESS GOING FORWARD.
IT'S TRUE THAT SINCE YOU'RE IN HIGH SCHOOL...
...YOU NEED YOUR PARENTS' PERMISSION TO ABORT.
AND SHOULD YOU DECIDE TO KEEP THE BABY...
...YOU'LL NEED THEIR SUPPORT TO RAISE IT EVEN MORE.

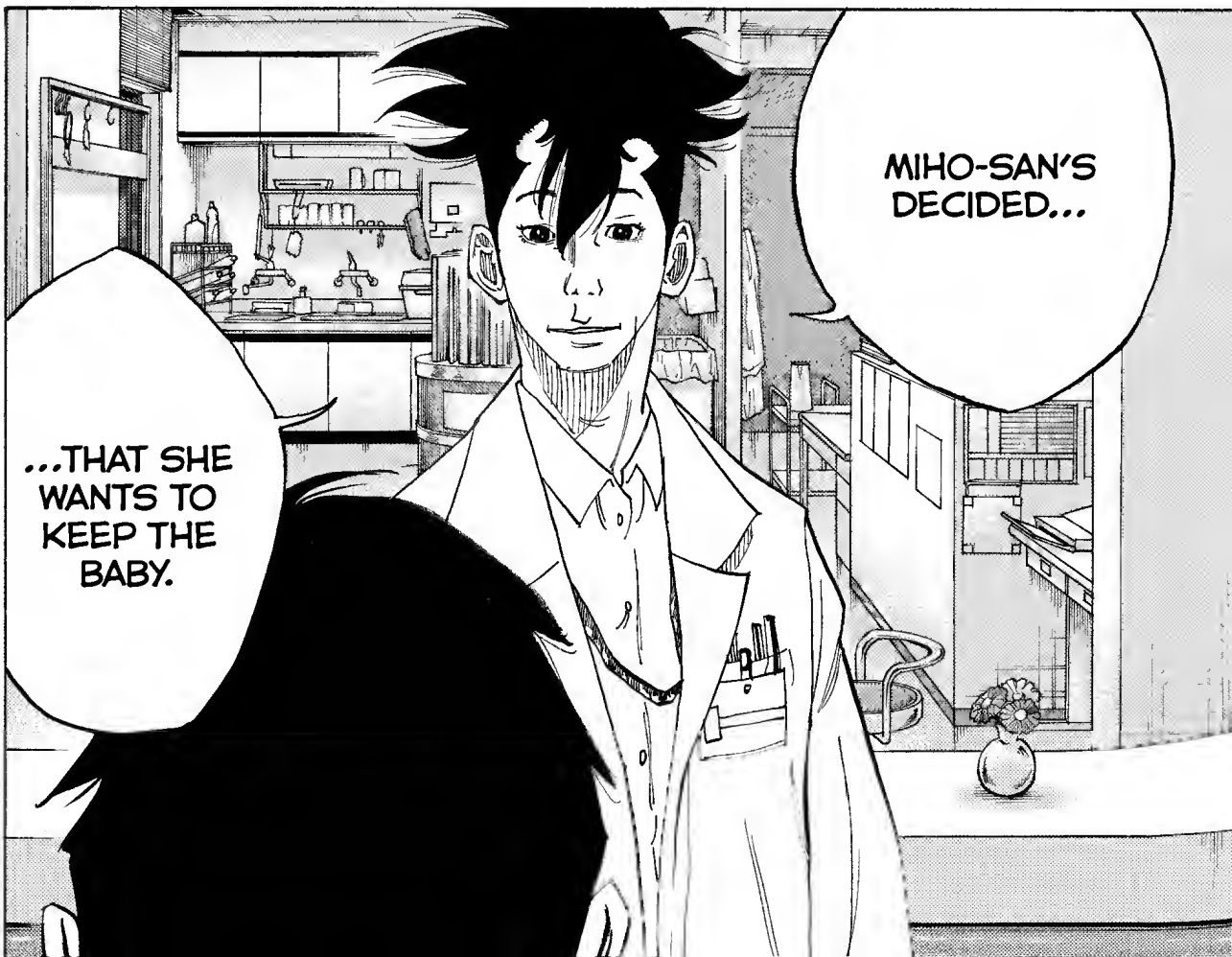
BUT YOU CAN'T MAKE THIS DECISION FOR YOUR PARENTS' SAKE.
YOU NEED TO MAKE IT FOR YOURSELF, MIHO-SAN.

MIHO, I...
...
...ARE YOU GLAD YOU HAD ME?
...
MOM...

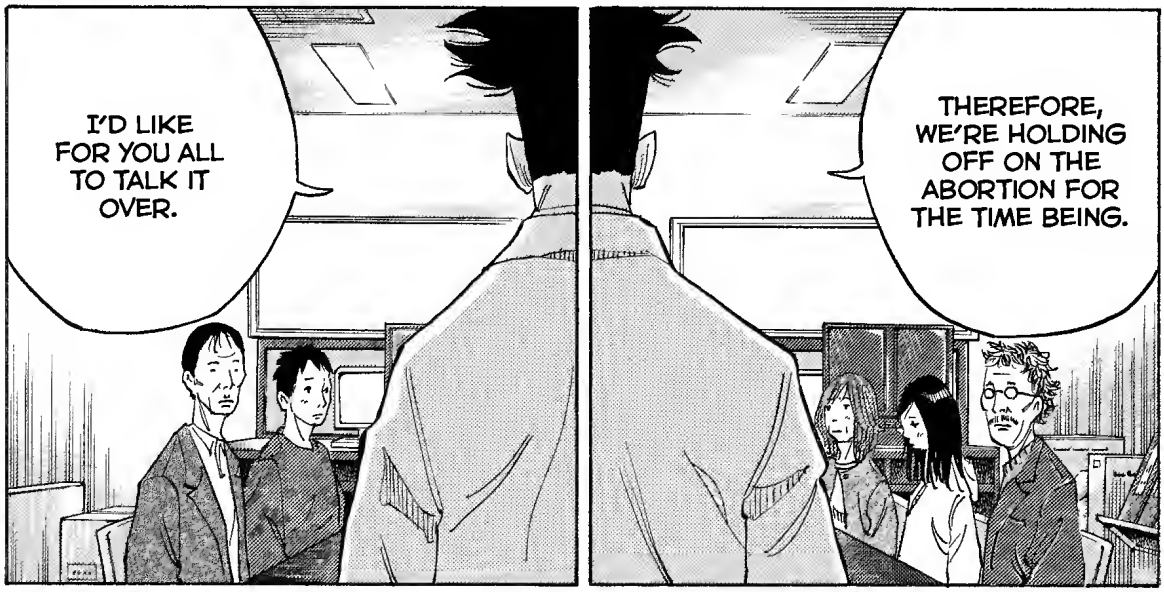

MOM...!

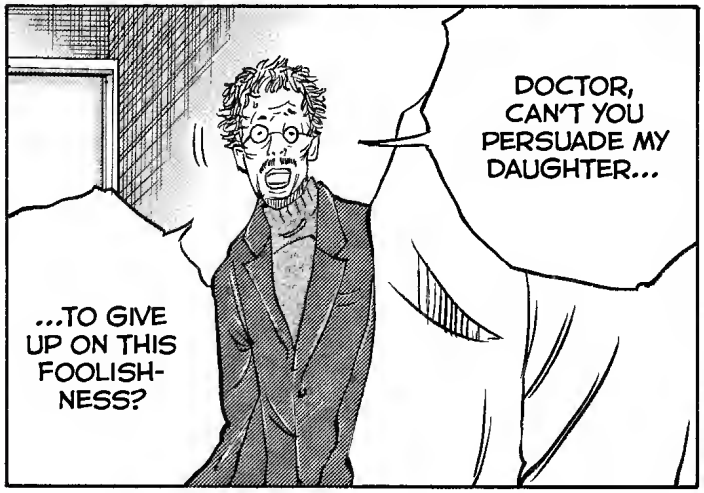
EXCUSE ME...WHERE IS NOMURA MIHO'S ROOM?
NURSE STATION
MIHO-SAN?
ARE YOU HER PARTNER?
...YES, SIR...

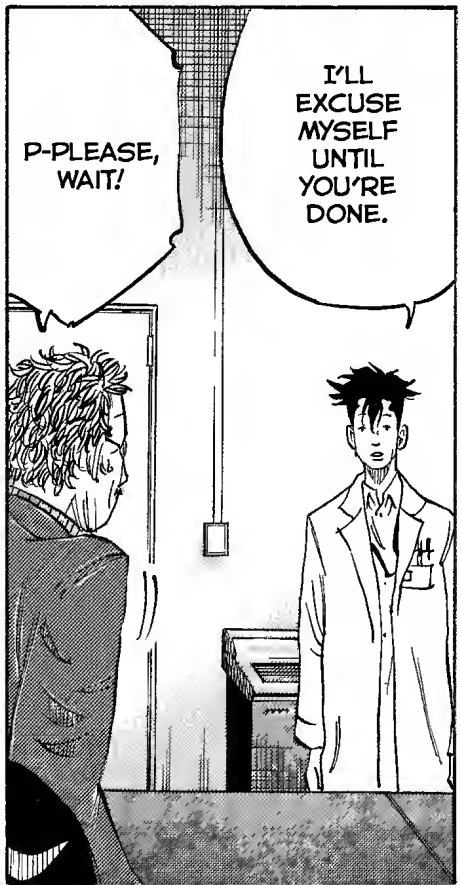
...I'M JUST SO WORRIED–
GOOD TIMING.
...I'M JUST...
HER PARENTS ASKED ME TO STAY AWAY FROM HER, BUT...
CAN YOU CALL YOUR PARENTS, PLEASE?
HUH?


MIHO-SAN'S DECIDED...
...THAT SHE WANTS TO KEEP THE BABY.

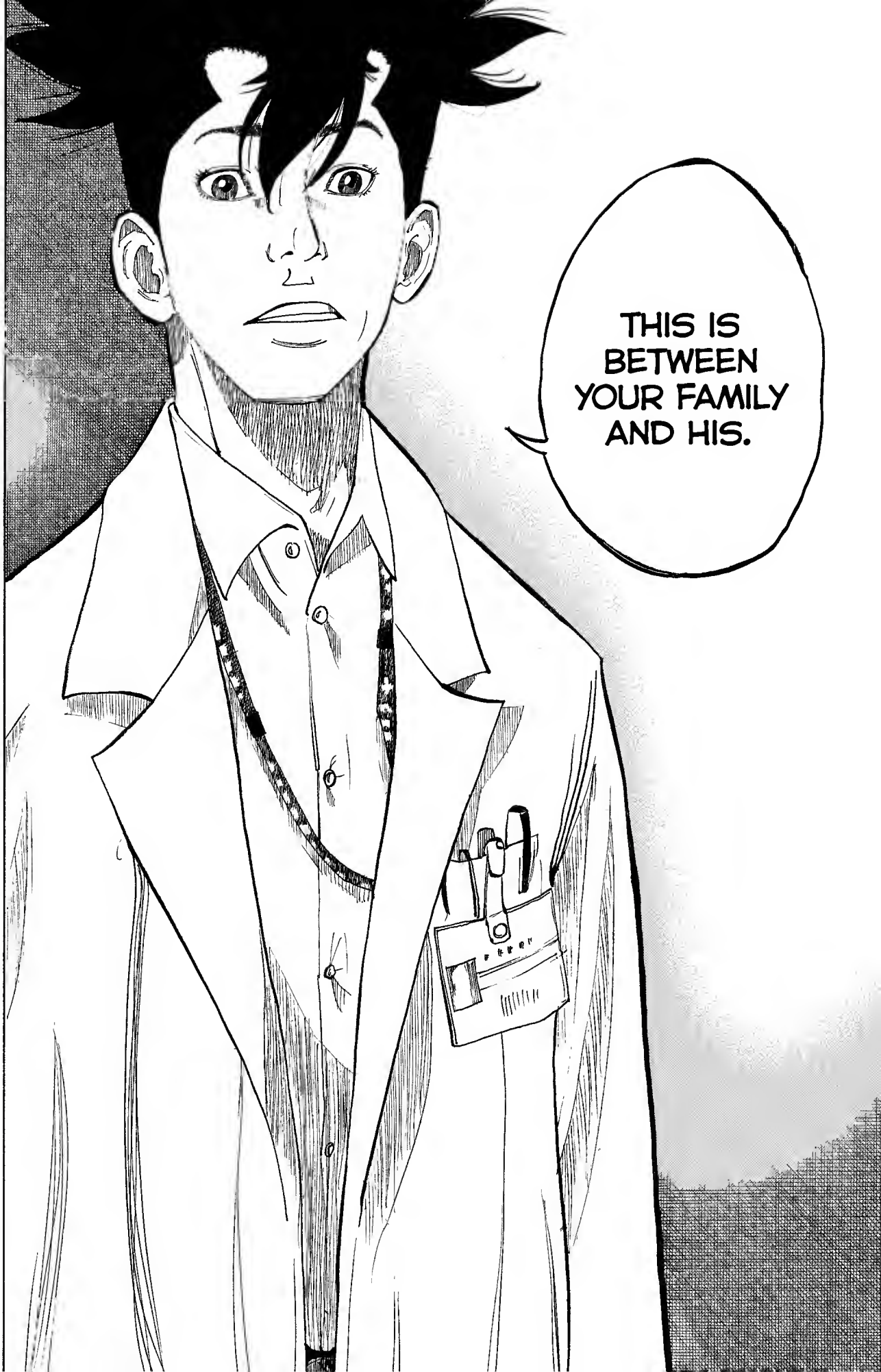
MIHO-SAN SAYS SHE'D LIKE TO KEEP THE BABY.
CONFERENCE ROOM


I'D LIKE FOR YOU ALL TO TALK IT OVER.
THEREFORE, WE'RE HOLDING OFF ON THE ABORTION FOR THE TIME BEING.

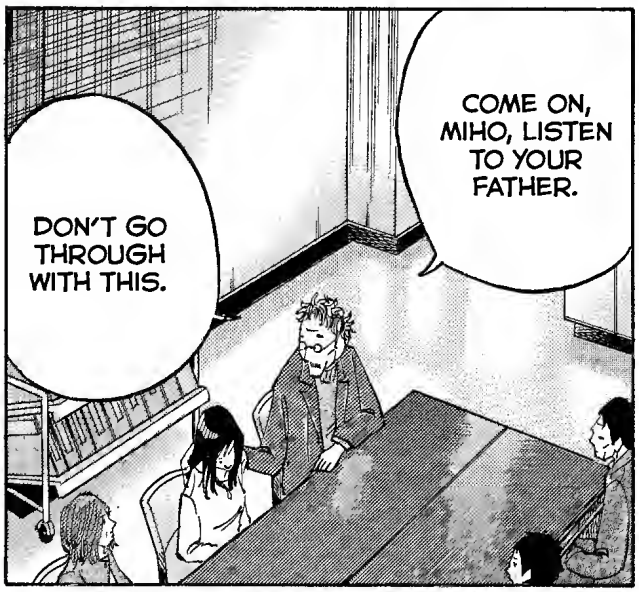

DOCTOR, CAN'T YOU PERSUADE MY DAUGHTER...
...TO GIVE UP ON THIS FOOLISH-NESS?


P-PLEASE, WAIT!
I'LL EXCUSE MYSELF UNTIL YOU'RE DONE.

NO, I'M AFRAID I CAN'T.

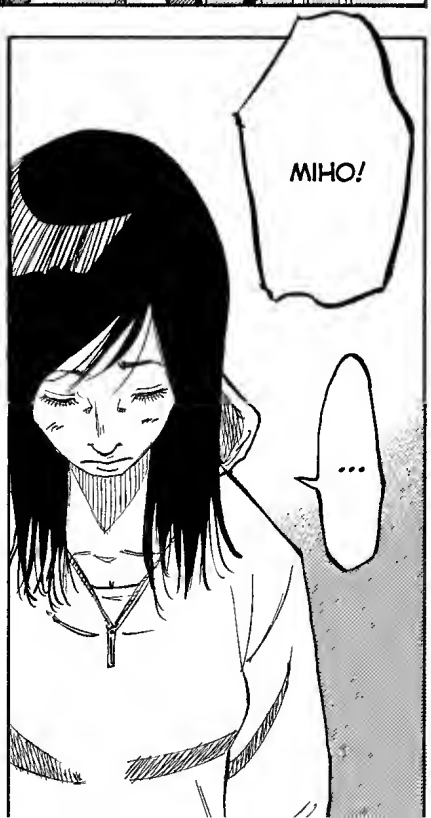

THIS IS BETWEEN YOUR FAMILY AND HIS.

MIHO.
THERE'S NO NEED FOR YOU TO RUIN YOUR LIFE...
...HAVE THIS BABY, AND RAISE IT.
PERSONA CATHOLIC HOSPITAL

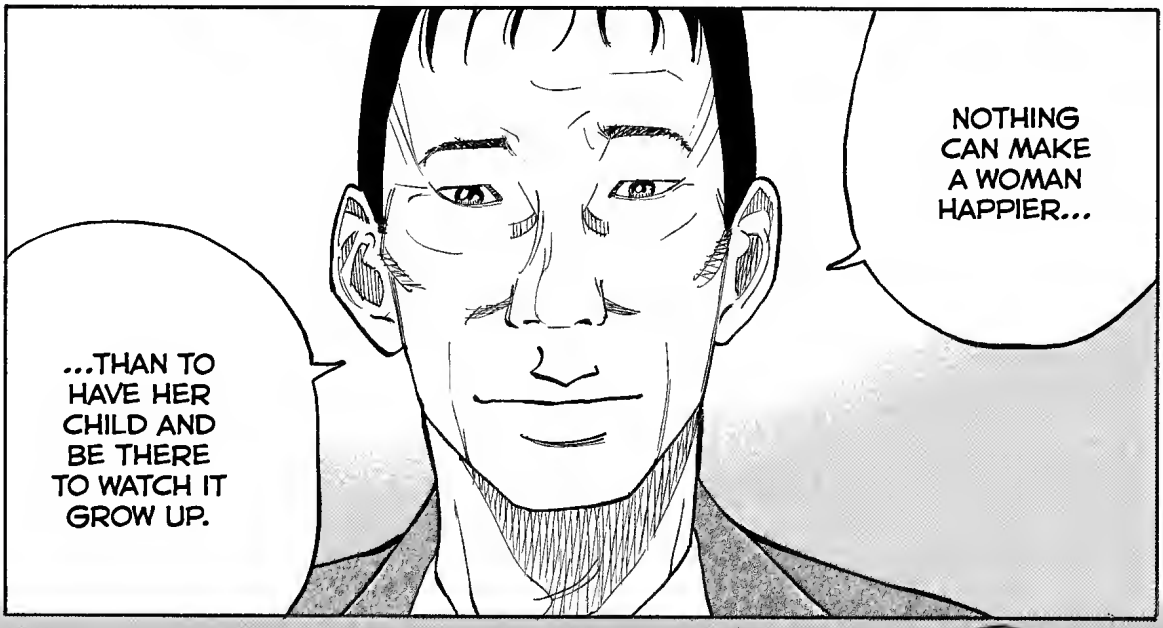

COME ON, MIHO, LISTEN TO YOUR FATHER.
DON'T GO THROUGH WITH THIS.

BESIDES, WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO ABOUT SCHOOL?

HAVEN'T YOU SAID ENOUGH, NOMURA-SAN?
YOUR DAUGHTER HERSELF SAYS SHE WANTS TO KEEP IT.

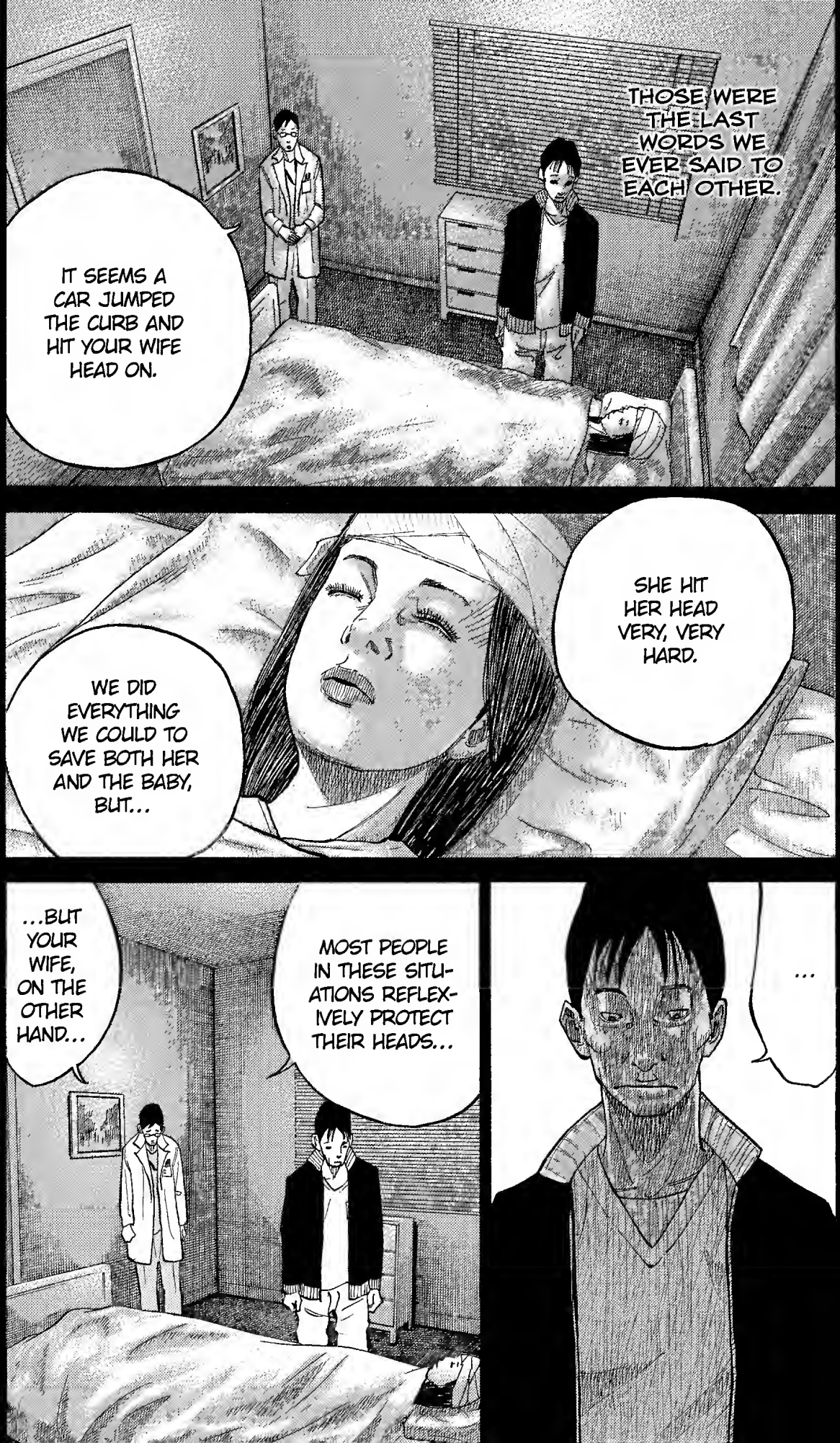

MIHO!
...

Y...
YOU CAN'T BE SAYING YOU *APPROVE* OF THIS IRRE-SPONSIBILITY?
DAD...


NOTHING CAN MAKE A WOMAN HAPPIER...
...THAN TO HAVE HER CHILD AND BE THERE TO WATCH IT GROW UP.

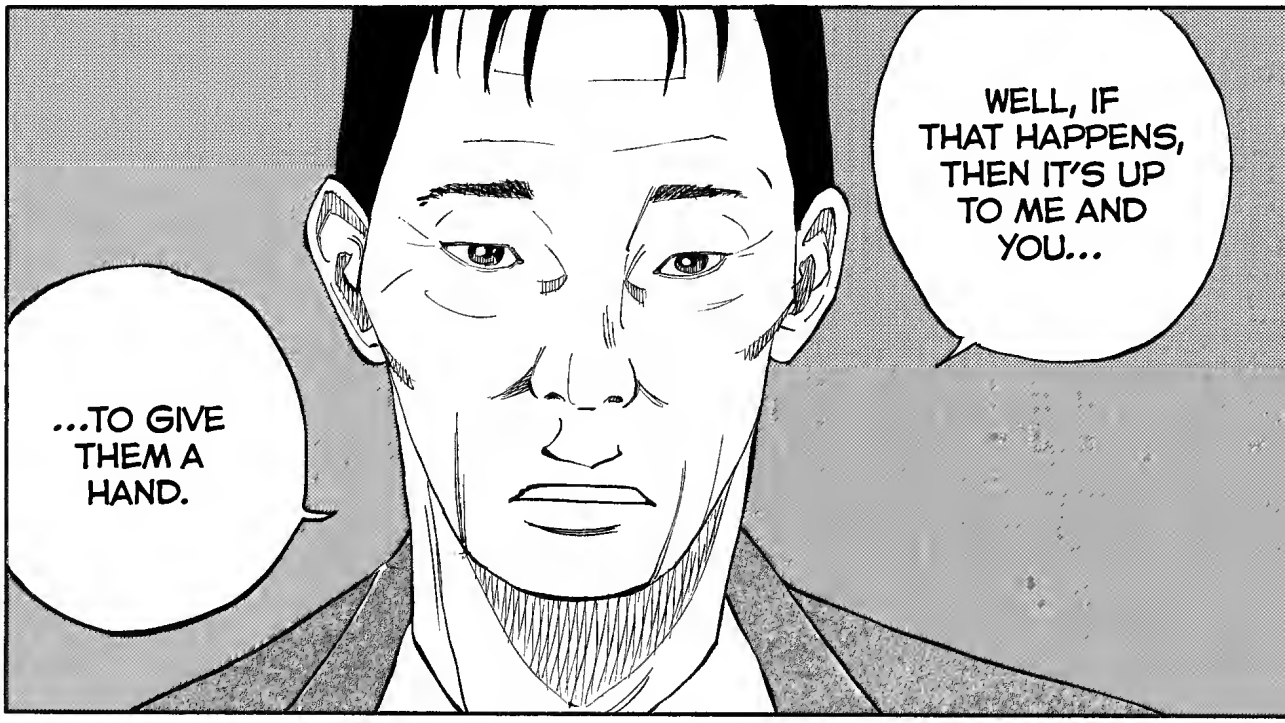
YOU GOT IT!
SORRY, BABE. CAN YOU RUN DOWN TO DEGAWA-SAN'S PLACE ON 2ND STREET FOR ME?
KNOW HOW I KNOW? 'CAUSE MY SON'S MOTHER DIDN'T GET TO BE THERE.

IT'S FINE!
IT'S NOTHING I CAN'T HANDLE.
HELL OF A BOSS YOU GOT THERE, MISSUS!
SENDING A PREGNANT LADY OFF ON ERRANDS!
HEY.
BE CAREFUL OUT THERE, NOW.
HEH! HOW'D HE GET A WIFE LIKE YOU?
HA HA HA!
YOU GOT IT!


IT SEEMS A CAR JUMPED THE CURB AND HIT YOUR WIFE HEAD ON.
THOSE WERE THE LAST WORDS WE EVER SAID TO EACH OTHER.
WE DID EVERYTHING WE COULD TO SAVE BOTH HER AND THE BABY, BUT...
SHE HIT HER HEAD VERY, VERY HARD.
...BUT YOUR WIFE, ON THE OTHER HAND...
MOST PEOPLE IN THESE SITUATIONS REFLEXIVELY PROTECT THEIR HEADS...
...

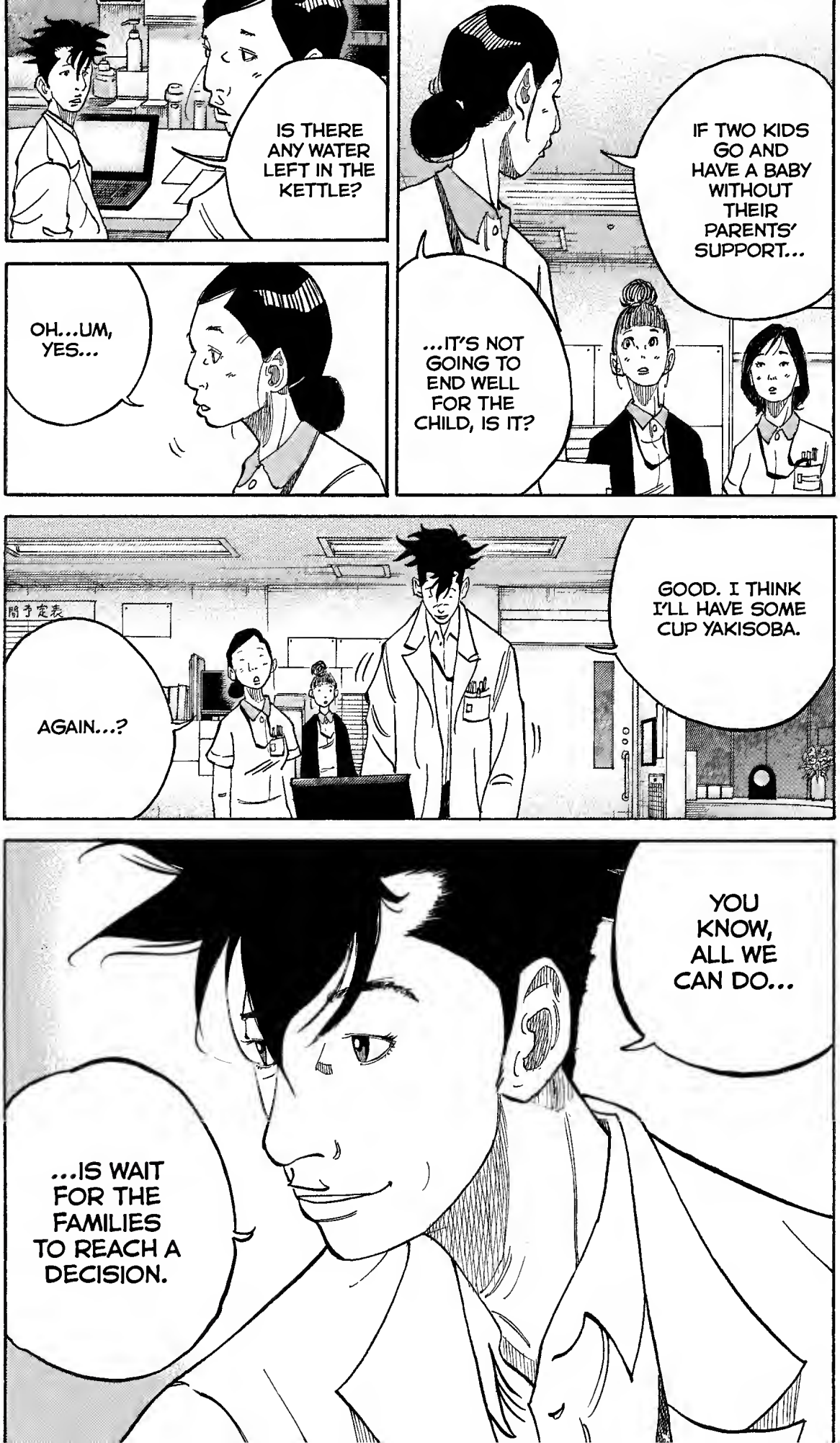
...
...WAS FOUND PROTECTING HER STOMACH.
...
SHE NEVER GOT TO HOLD HIM.
NEVER EVEN GOT TO SEE HIS FACE.
BUT THEY'RE STILL IN HIGH SCHOOL!
HOW DO THEY EXPECT TO PROVIDE FOR THE BABY?
IF THE TWO OF THEM SAY THEY'RE READY TO TAKE CARE OF THE CHILD...
...THAT'S GOOD ENOUGH FOR ME.

WHAT IF THEY REGRET KEEPING THE BABY ONCE IT'S BORN?
OR IF THEY DECIDE IT'S TOO MUCH WORK TO RAISE IT AND JUST GIVE UP?
WHAT THEN?! THAT'S GOING TO BE AN AWFUL LOT OF TROUBLE!
ESPECIALLY FOR THE BABY!


WELL, IF THAT HAPPENS, THEN IT'S UP TO ME AND YOU...
...TO GIVE THEM A HAND.

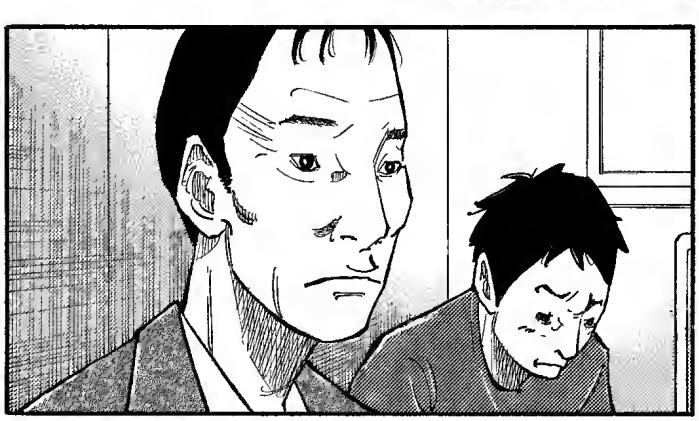
THIS CONVERSATION IS GOING NOWHERE.
COME ON, DEAR. MIHO.
LET'S TELL THEM WE'RE BACK ON FOR THE OPERATION.

DEAR...
...LET'S LET MIHO HAVE HER BABY.
WHA...
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?
HUH...?
HEY, NOW.
BUT, YOU KNOW, WHEN A GIRL HER AGE DECIDES TO KEEP THE BABY...
...DOESN'T IT MAKE YOU WANNA ROOT FOR HER?

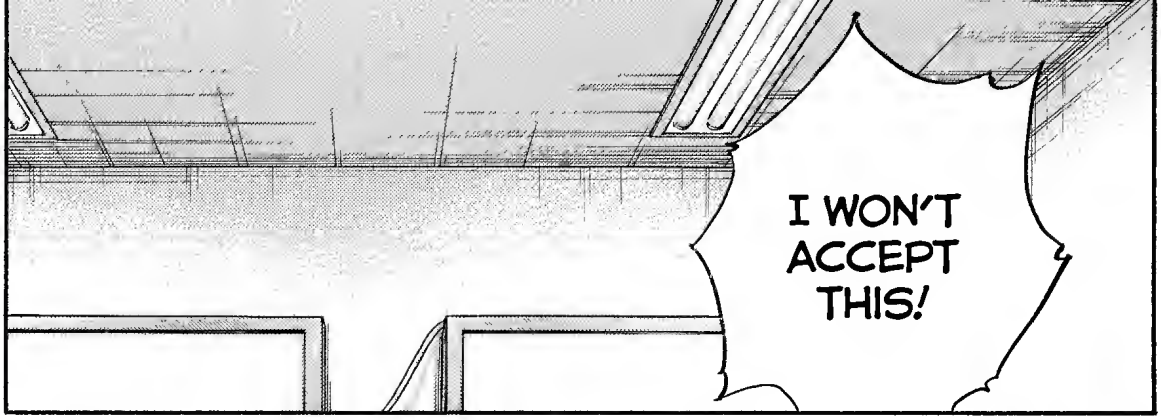

IS THERE ANY WATER LEFT IN THE KETTLE?
OH...UM, YES...
IF TWO KIDS GO AND HAVE A BABY WITHOUT THEIR PARENTS' SUPPORT...
...IT'S NOT GOING TO END WELL FOR THE CHILD, IS IT?
AGAIN...?
GOOD. I THINK I'LL HAVE SOME CUP YAKISOBA.
...IS WAIT FOR THE FAMILIES TO REACH A DECISION.
YOU KNOW, ALL WE CAN DO...

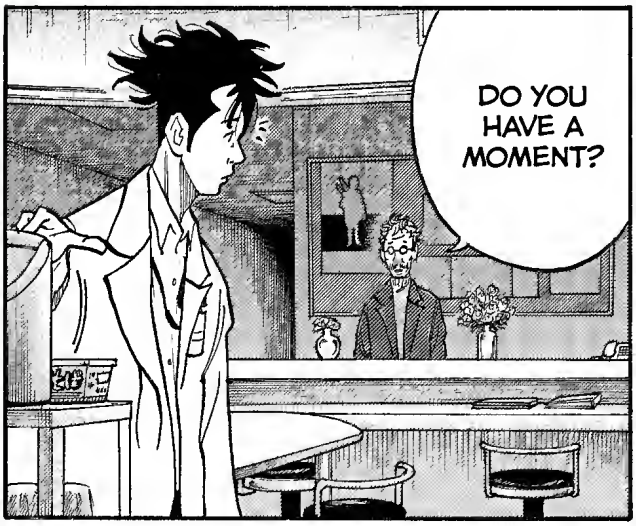
I DON'T WANT TO PUT MIHO THROUGH THAT, EITHER.
BELIEVE ME.
...RAISING A CHILD IS A BIG RESPONSIBILITY.
IT'S TRUE...
...I'M GLAD WE WENT AHEAD AND HAD MIHO.
...
BUT, YOU KNOW...
DEAR...
THAT LITTLE BABY MIHO'S CARRYING...
...
I'M SORRY I DIDN'T ANSWER YOU SOONER, MIHO.
BUT...

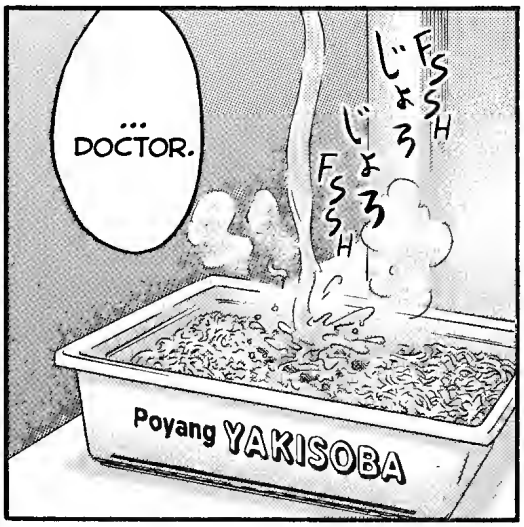
...IS OUR FAMILY, TOO.



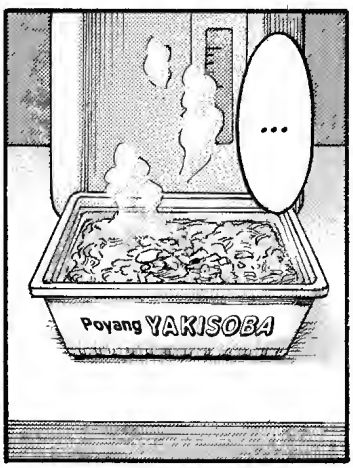
I...
ガチャッ
CLUNK

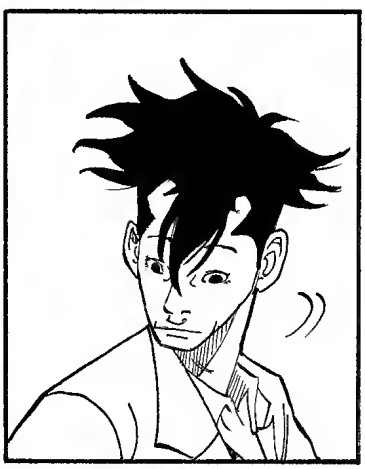

I WON'T ACCEPT THIS!


DO YOU HAVE A MOMENT?

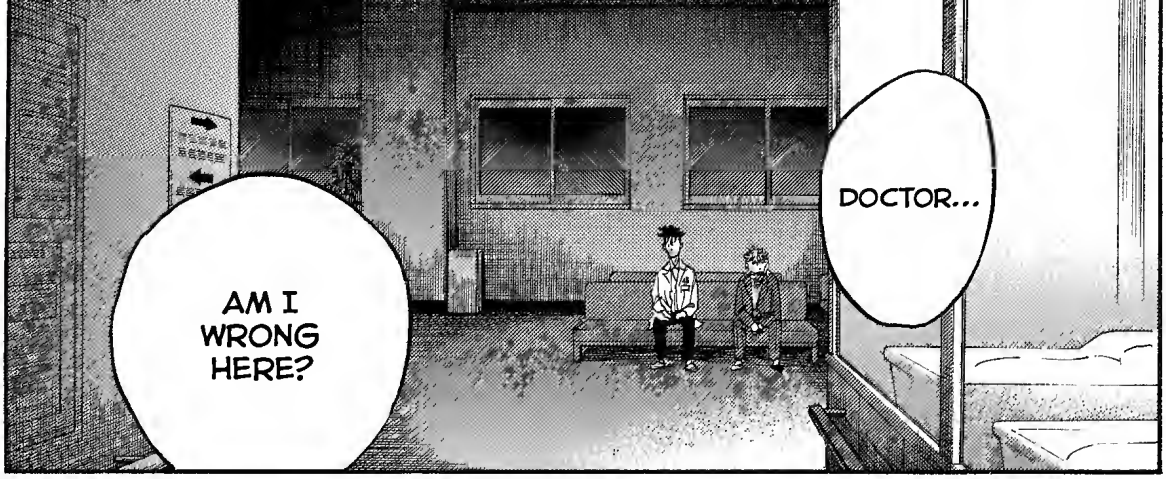

... DOCTOR.
FSSH じょろ じょろ FSSH
Poyang YAKISOBA

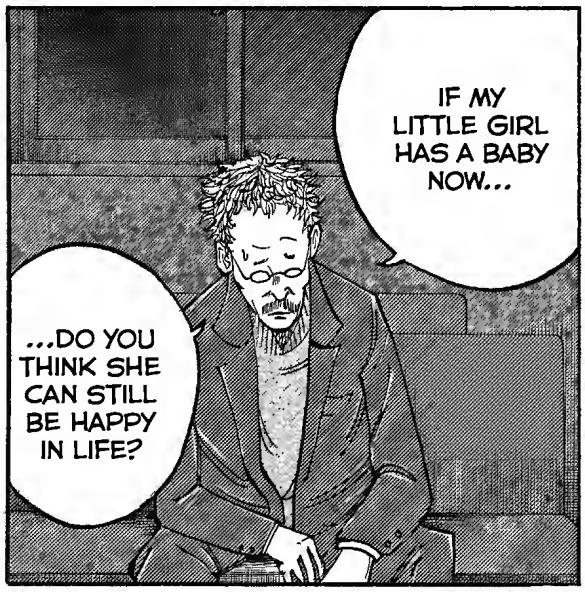
OF COURSE.

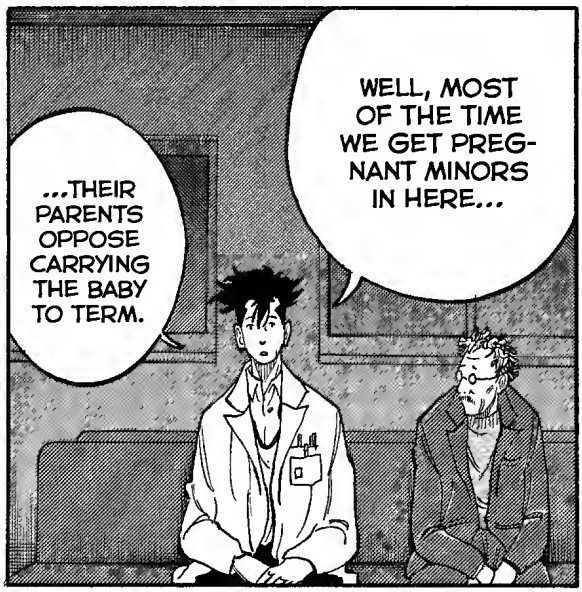

...
Poyang YAKISOBA

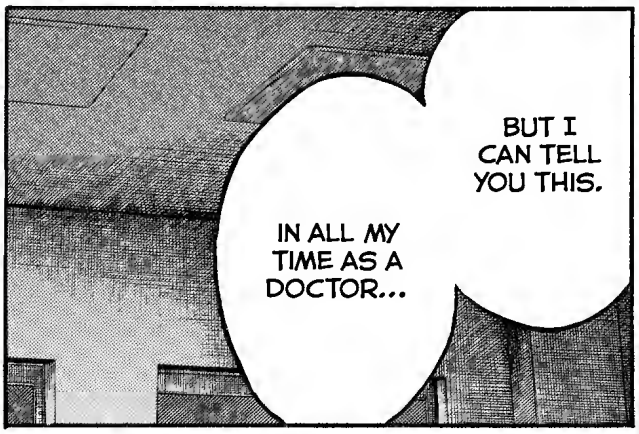


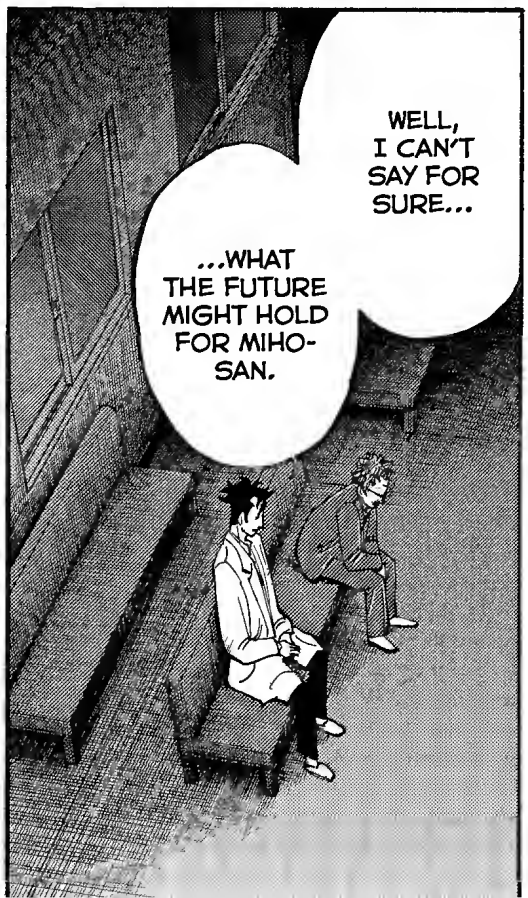
...
DR. KOUNOTORI!


DOCTOR...
AM I WRONG HERE?

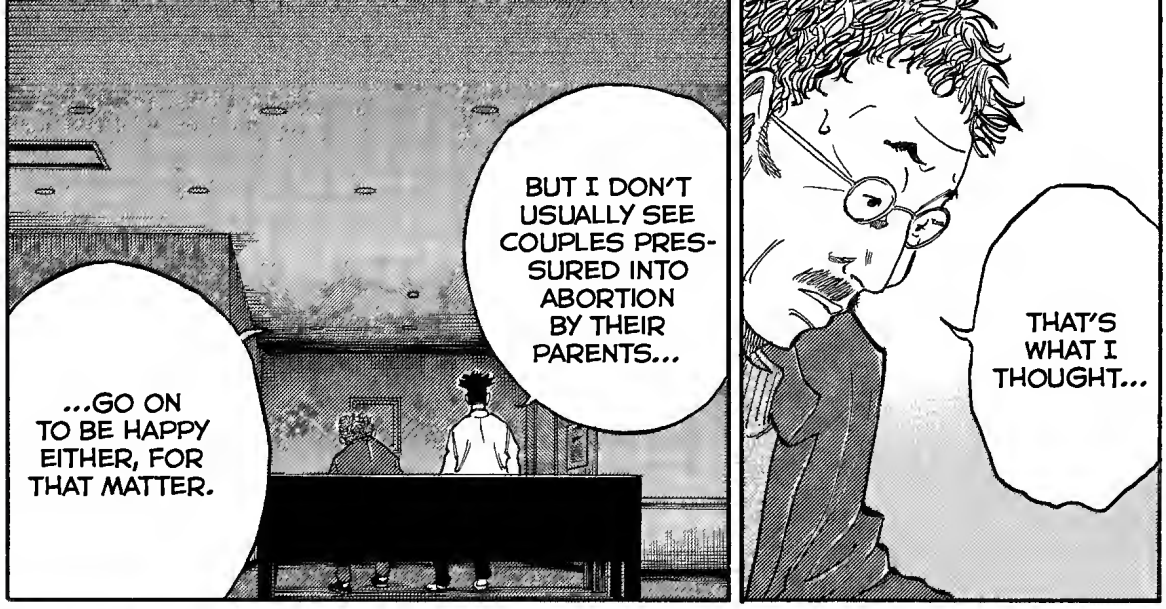

IF MY LITTLE GIRL HAS A BABY NOW...
...DO YOU THINK SHE CAN STILL BE HAPPY IN LIFE?

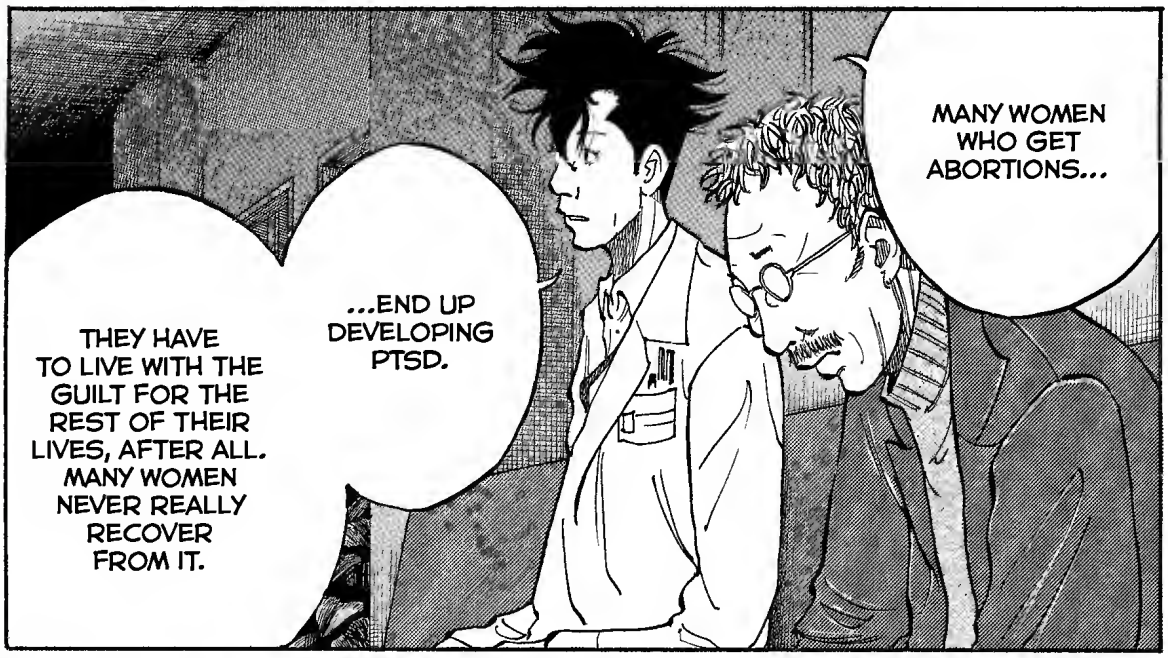

WELL, MOST OF THE TIME WE GET PREGNANT MINORS IN HERE...
...THEIR PARENTS OPPOSE CARRYING THE BABY TO TERM.


BUT I CAN TELL YOU THIS.
IN ALL MY TIME AS A DOCTOR...


WELL, I CAN'T SAY FOR SURE...
...WHAT THE FUTURE MIGHT HOLD FOR MIHO-SAN.

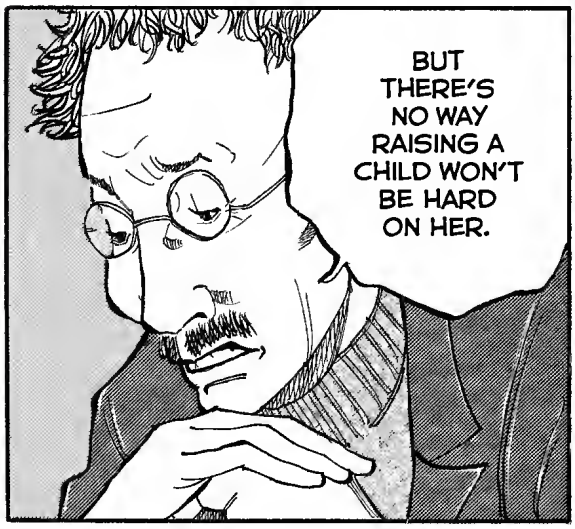
...I'VE NEVER SEEN A HIGH SCHOOLER KEEP THEIR BABY AGAINST THEIR PARENTS' WISHES...
...RAISE IT WITHOUT ANY PARENTAL SUPPORT, AND GO ON TO BE HAPPY.

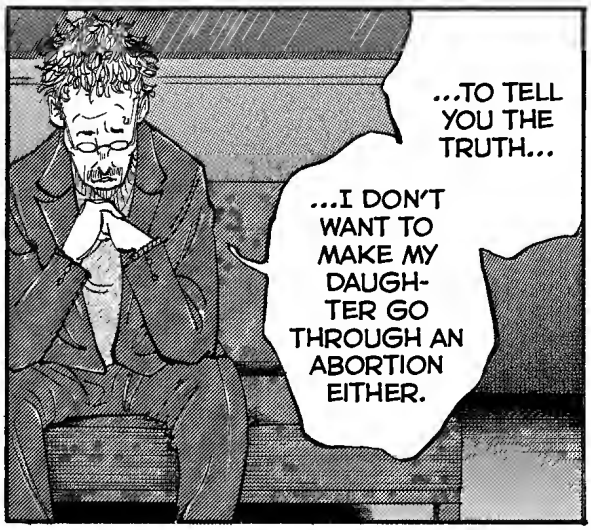

BUT I DON'T USUALLY SEE COUPLES PRESSURED INTO ABORTION BY THEIR PARENTS...
...GO ON TO BE HAPPY EITHER, FOR THAT MATTER.
THAT'S WHAT I THOUGHT...


MANY WOMEN WHO GET ABORTIONS...
...END UP DEVELOPING PTSD.
THEY HAVE TO LIVE WITH THE GUILT FOR THE REST OF THEIR LIVES, AFTER ALL. MANY WOMEN NEVER REALLY RECOVER FROM IT.

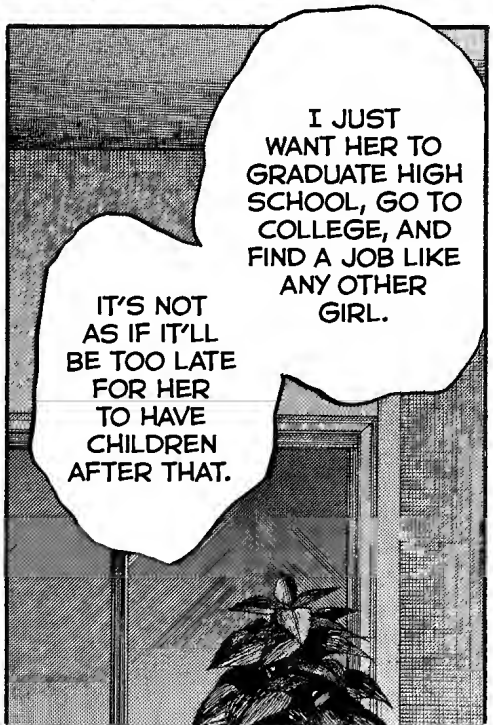
THOSE CASES MIGHT SOUND LIKE POLAR OPPOSITES,
BUT I SUSPECT...
ON THE OTHER HAND...
...THERE ARE THE PATIENTS I SEE FOR ABORTIONS TIME AND TIME AGAIN.

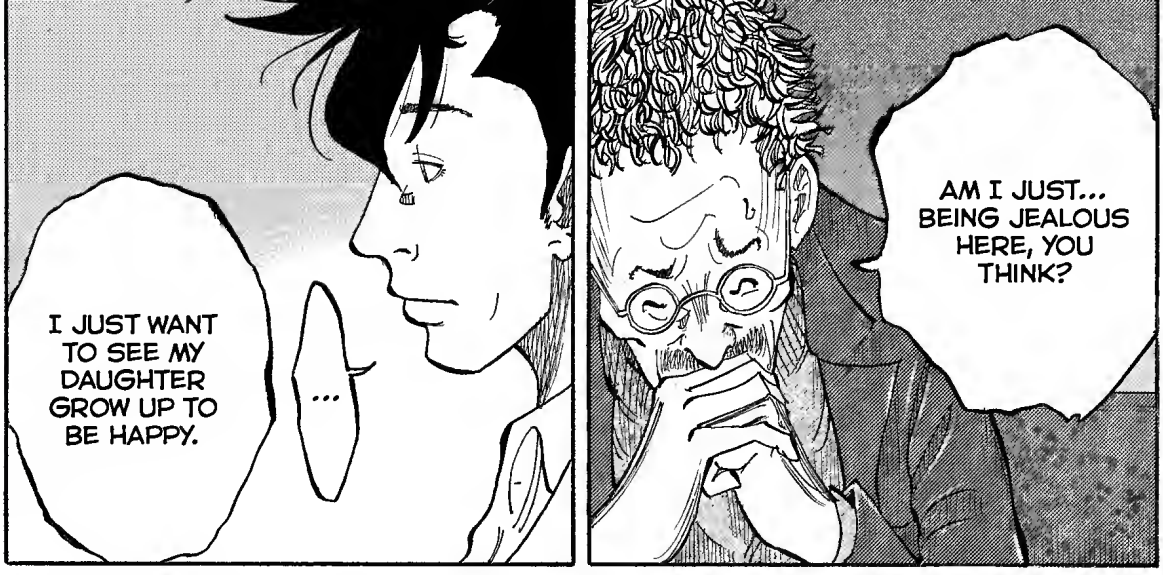
...THEY'RE ALL PATIENTS WHO RUSHED THE DECISION...
...WITHOUT EVER REALLY GRAPPLING WITH THE CONSE-QUENCES.

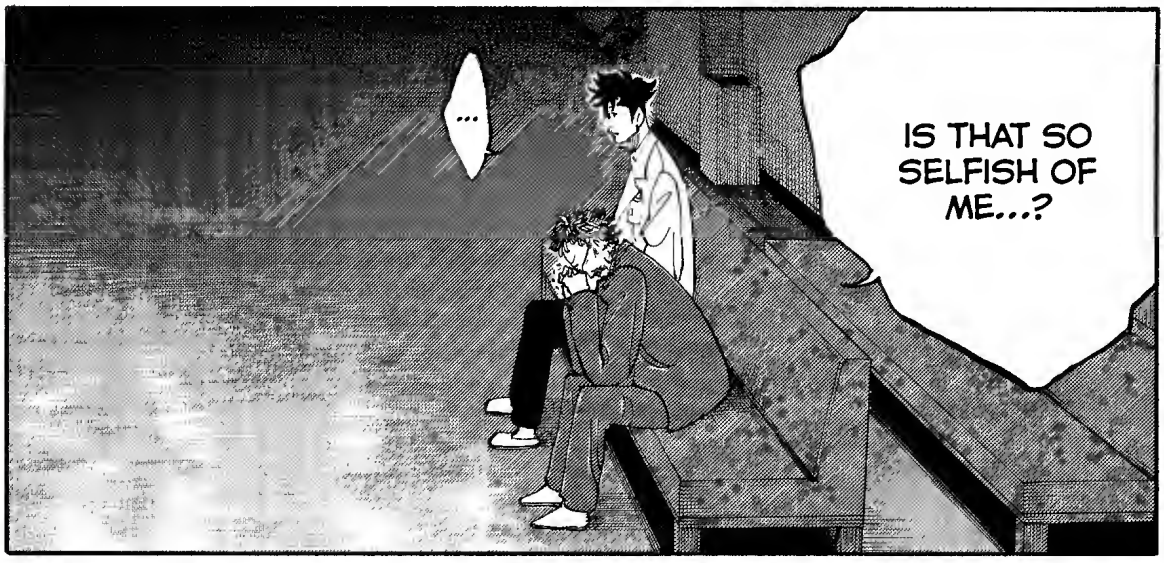

BUT THERE'S NO WAY RAISING A CHILD WON'T BE HARD ON HER.

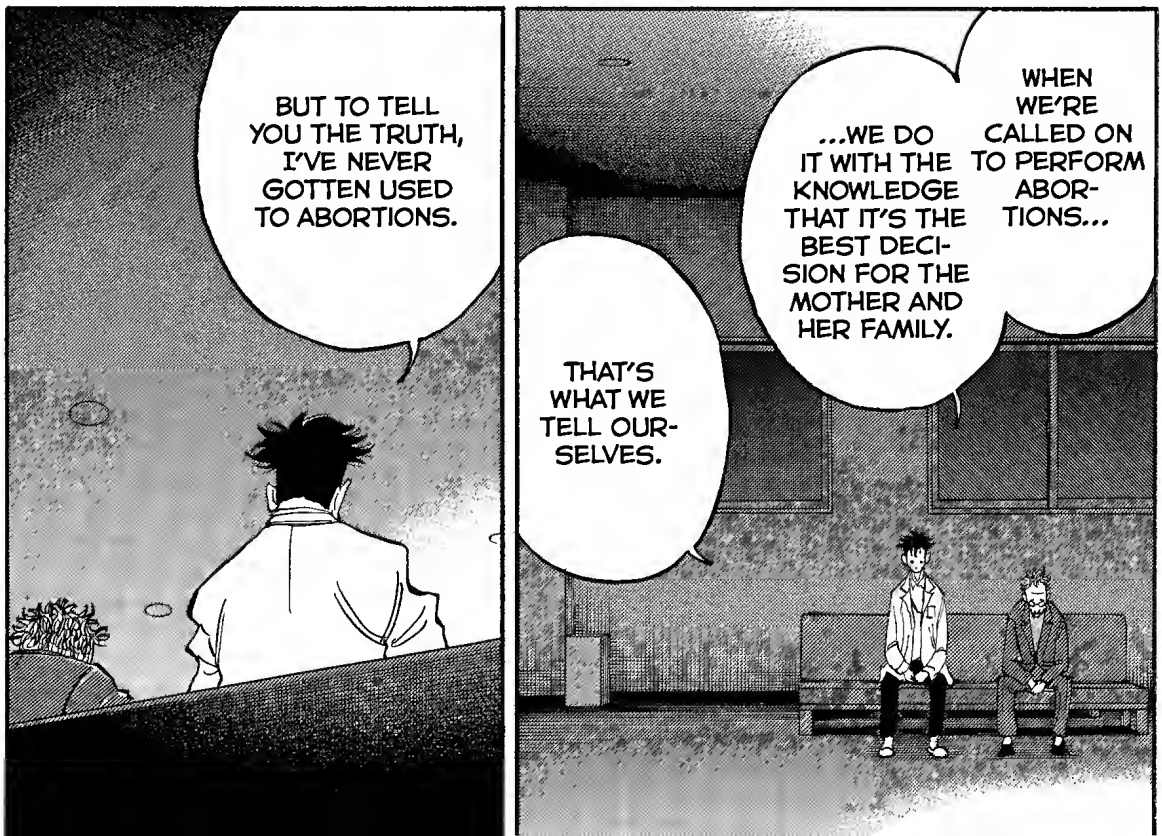

...TO TELL YOU THE TRUTH...
...I DON'T WANT TO MAKE MY DAUGH-TER GO THROUGH AN ABORTION EITHER.

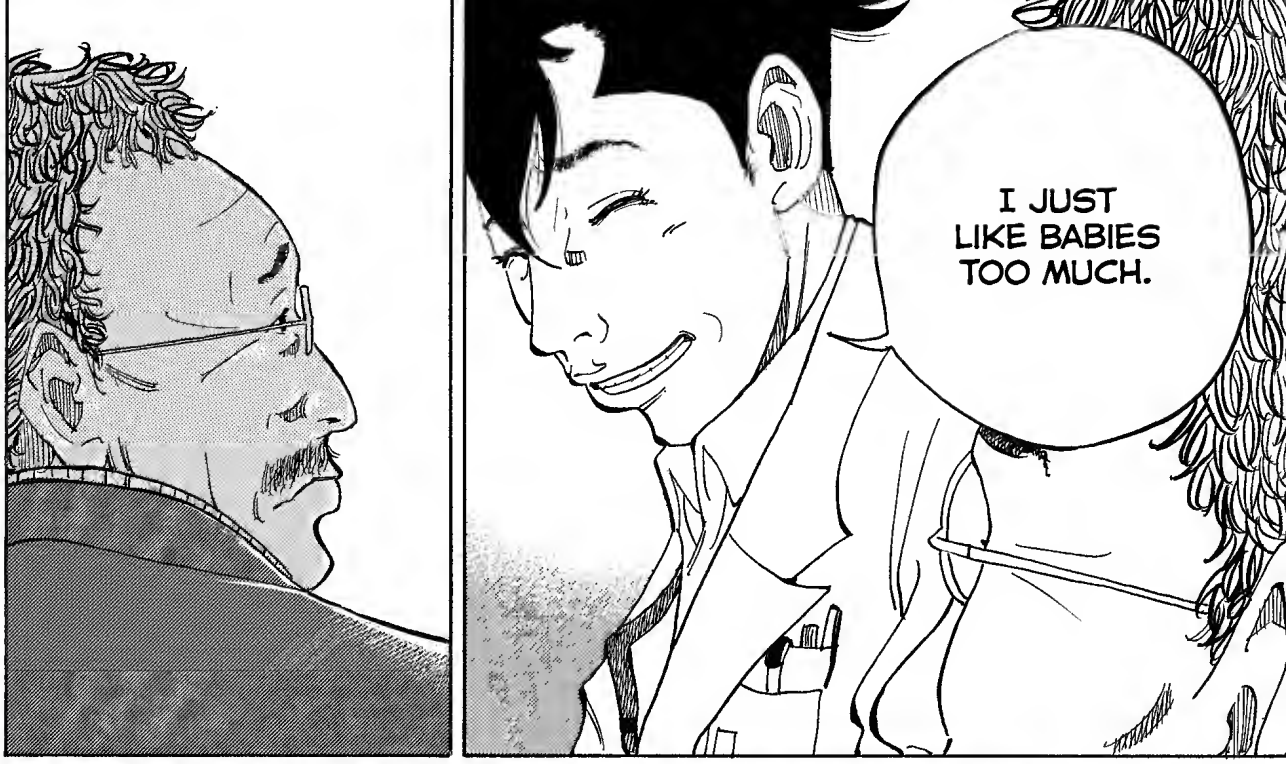
I'M JUST NOT READY TO LOSE MY LITTLE GIRL YET, DOCTOR.
A MOTHER AT 17...

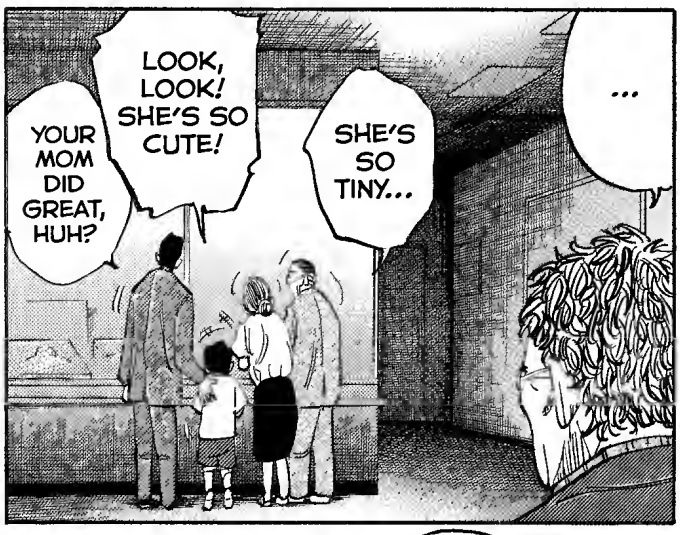

I JUST WANT HER TO GRADUATE HIGH SCHOOL, GO TO COLLEGE, AND FIND A JOB LIKE ANY OTHER GIRL.
IT'S NOT AS IF IT'LL BE TOO LATE FOR HER TO HAVE CHILDREN AFTER THAT.


I JUST WANT TO SEE MY DAUGHTER GROW UP TO BE HAPPY.
...
AM I JUST... BEING JEALOUS HERE, YOU THINK?


...
IS THAT SO SELFISH OF ME...?

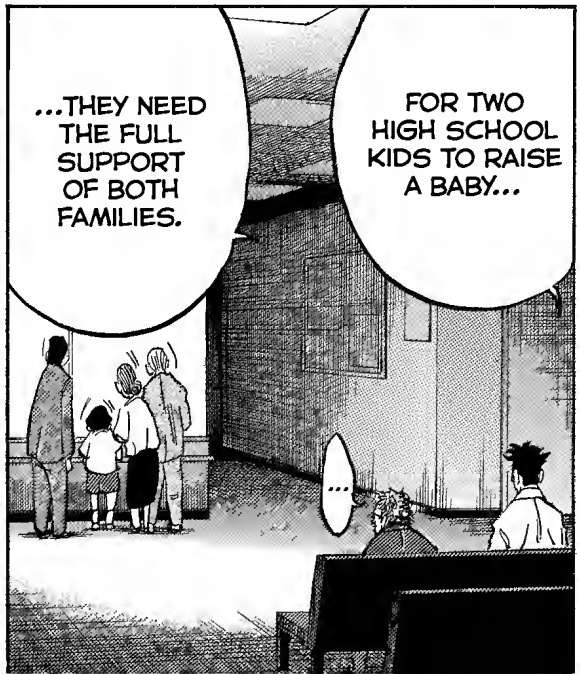

BUT TO TELL YOU THE TRUTH, I'VE NEVER GOTTEN USED TO ABORTIONS.
THAT'S WHAT WE TELL OURSELVES.
...WE DO IT WITH THE KNOWLEDGE THAT IT'S THE BEST DECISION FOR THE MOTHER AND HER FAMILY.
WHEN WE'RE CALLED ON TO PERFORM ABORTIONS...


I JUST LIKE BABIES TOO MUCH.


YOUR MOM DID GREAT, HUH?
LOOK, LOOK! SHE'S SO CUTE!
SHE'S SO TINY...
...

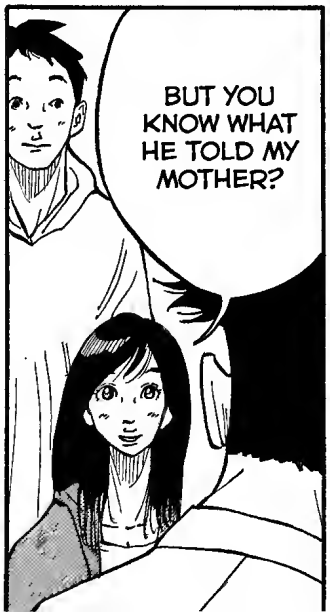
HEY! SHE OPENED HER EYES!

...ISN'T JUST HERS OR HER BOYFRIEND'S.
SO THE BABY YOUR DAUGHTER IS CARRYING...
...

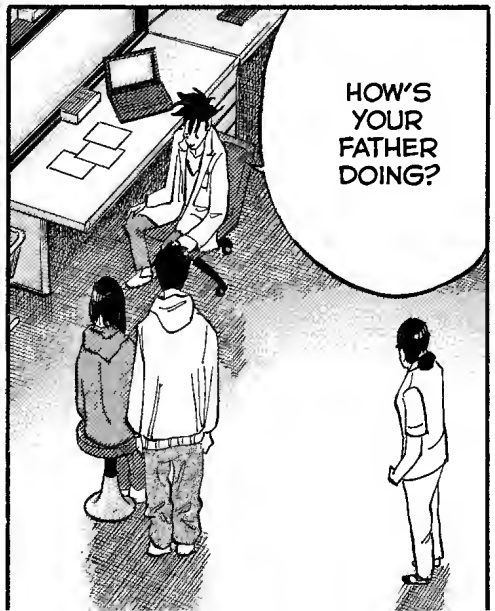

...THEY NEED THE FULL SUPPORT OF BOTH FAMILIES.
FOR TWO HIGH SCHOOL KIDS TO RAISE A BABY...
...

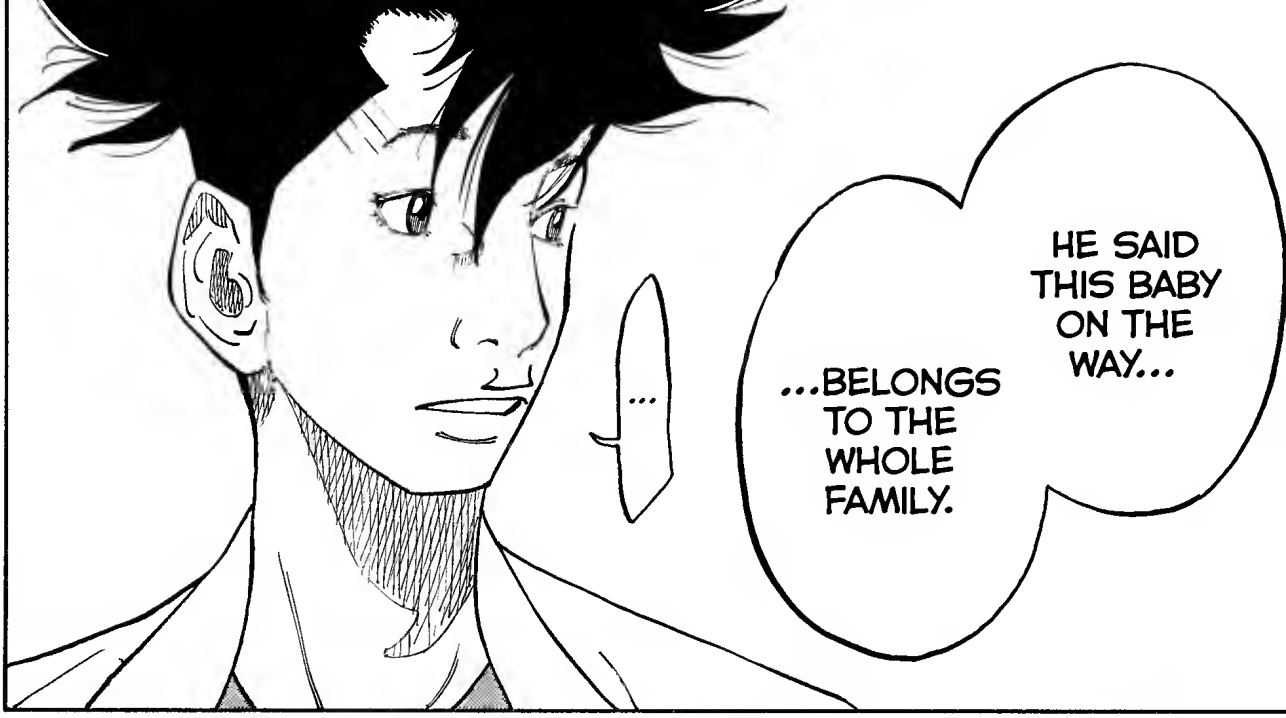
IT'S THE WHOLE FAMILY'S BABY. YOUR FAMILY AND THAT BOY'S.

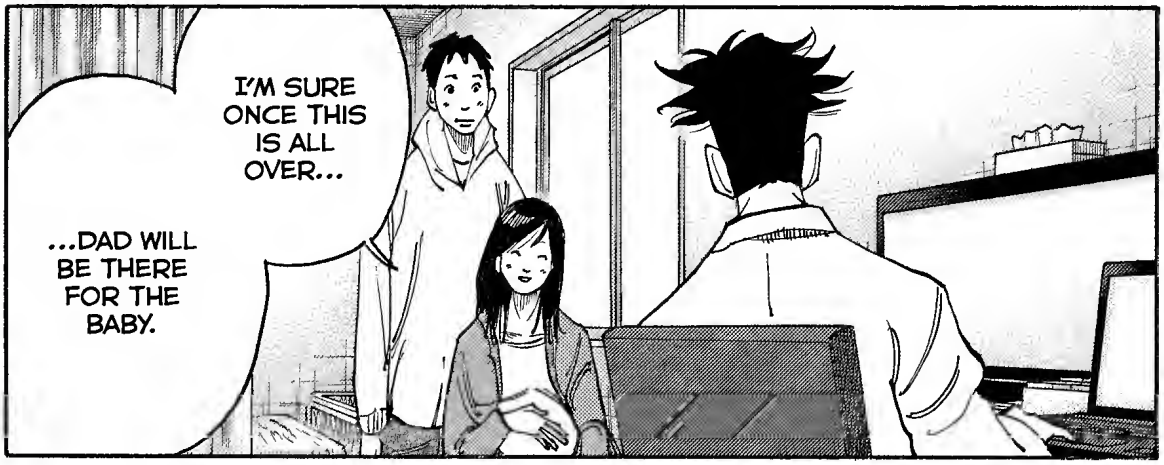
EVERYTHING SEEMS TO BE NORMAL.

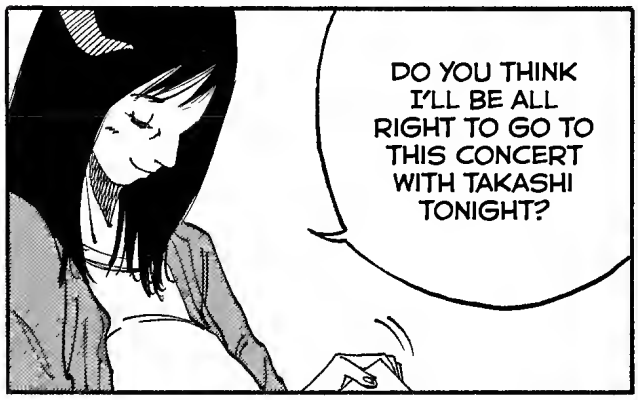

BUT YOU KNOW WHAT HE TOLD MY MOTHER?

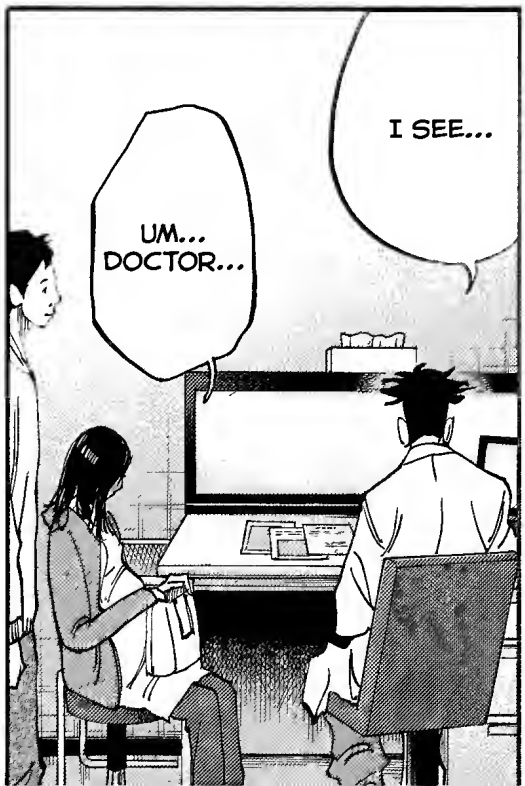
WELL, ACTUAL-LY...
...HE STILL HASN'T SAID A WORD TO ME.


HOW'S YOUR FATHER DOING?

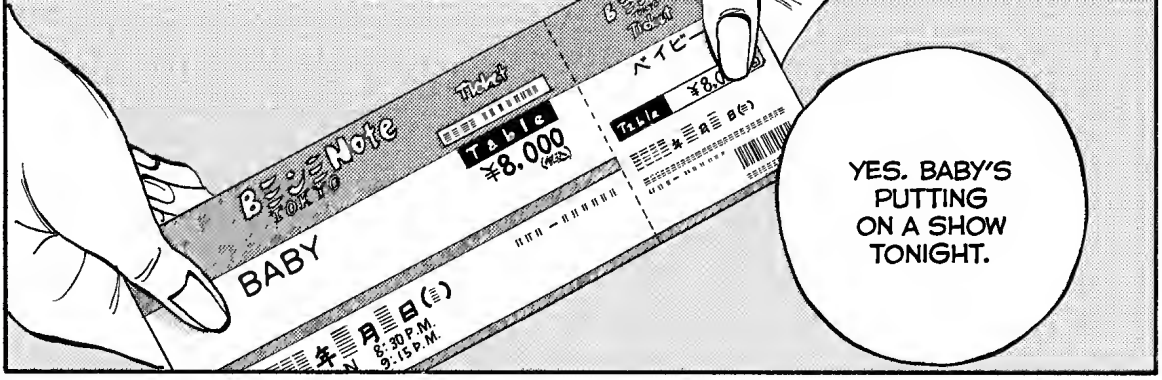

HE SAID THIS BABY ON THE WAY...
...BELONGS TO THE WHOLE FAMILY.
...


I'M SURE ONCE THIS IS ALL OVER...
...DAD WILL BE THERE FOR THE BABY.

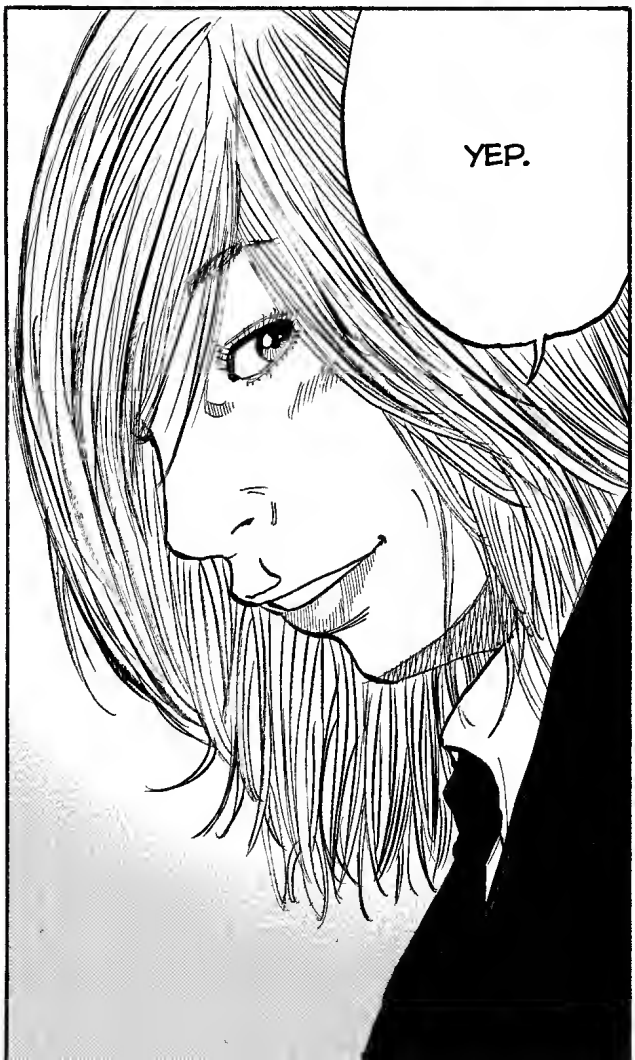

DO YOU THINK I'LL BE ALL RIGHT TO GO TO THIS CONCERT WITH TAKASHI TONIGHT?


I SEE...
UM... DOCTOR...

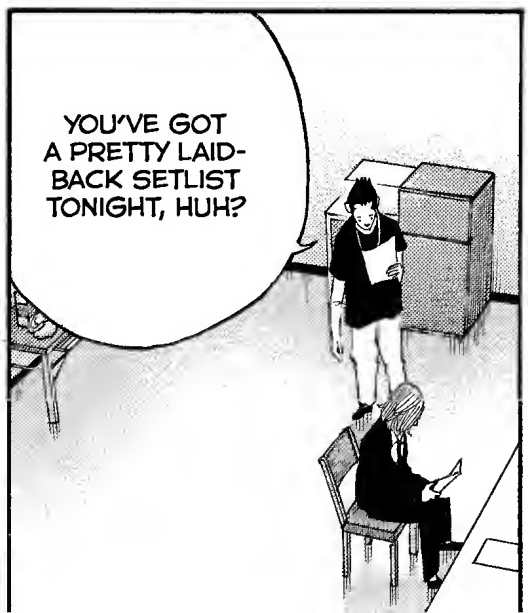
A CONCERT?

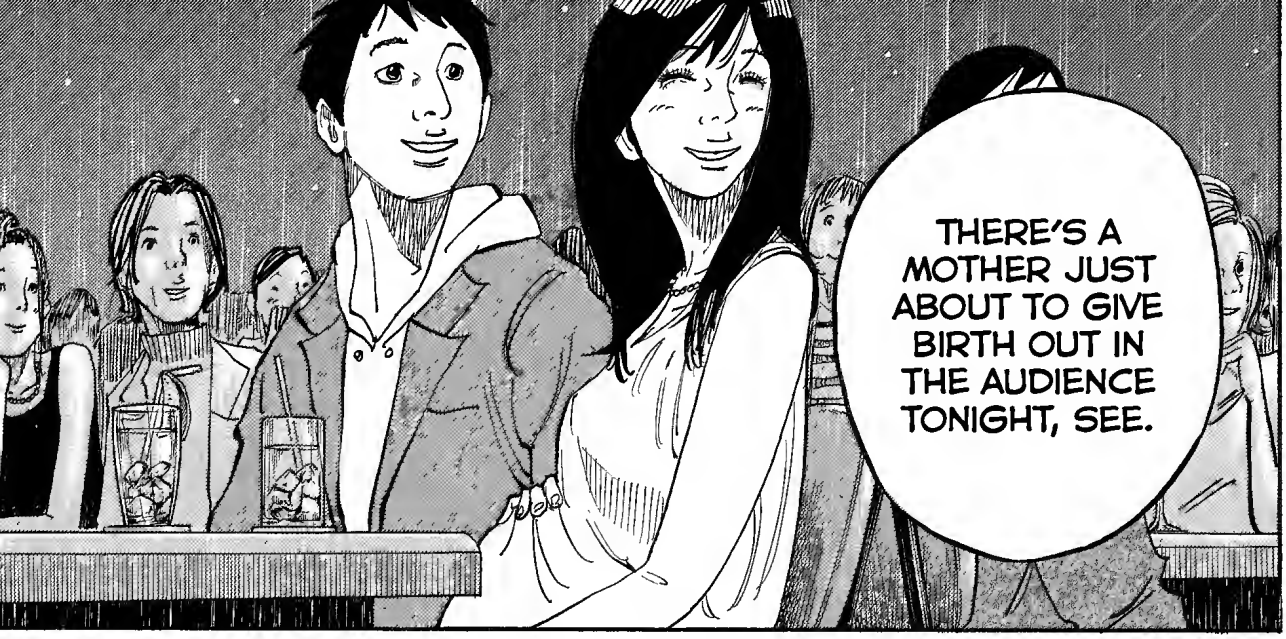

Blue Note TOKYO
BABY
Table
¥8,000
6:30 P.M.
9:15 P.M.
YES. BABY'S PUTTING ON A SHOW TONIGHT.

TONIGHT
BABY
Blue Note TOKYO

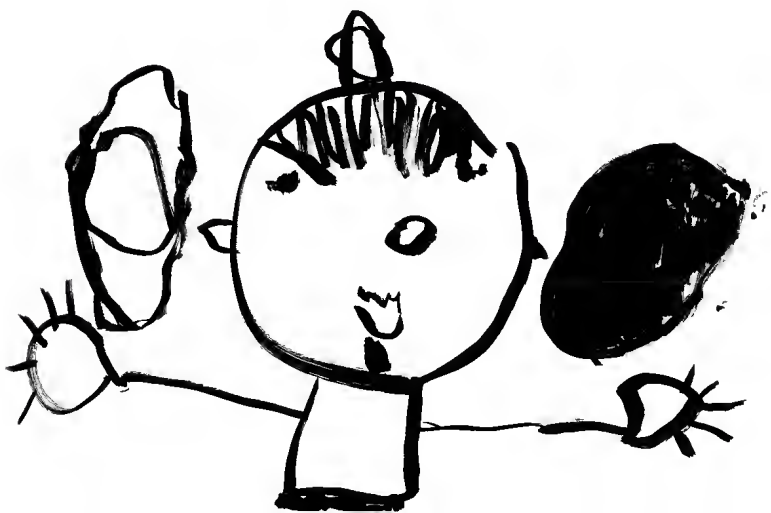

YEP.

WOW...


YOU'VE GOT A PRETTY LAID-BACK SETLIST TONIGHT, HUH?

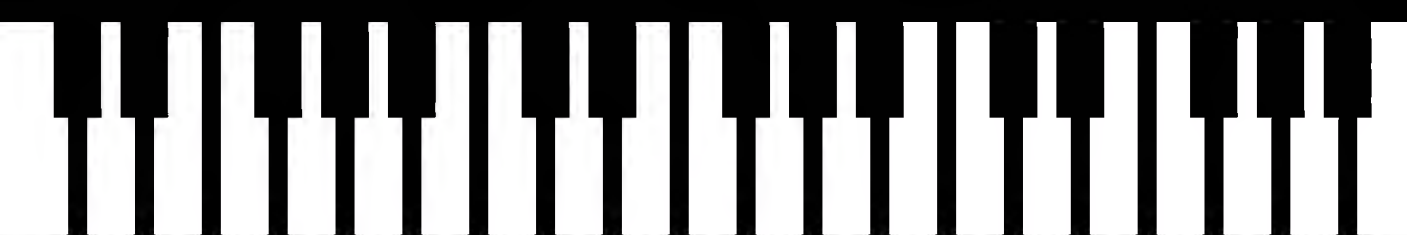

THERE'S A MOTHER JUST ABOUT TO GIVE BIRTH OUT IN THE AUDIENCE TONIGHT, SEE.

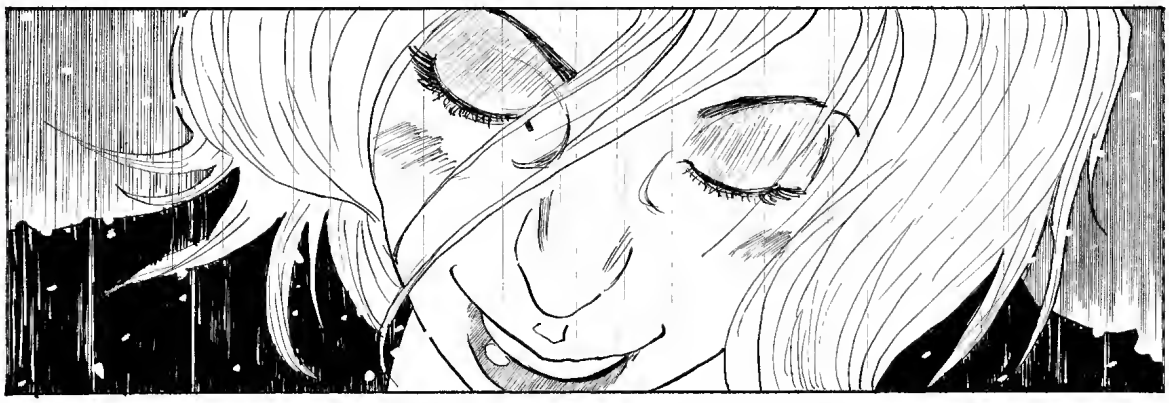
August 5th, 2013
I went to the pool today! Grown-up pools are real scary!
—Tenta



TRACK 5

Anencephaly





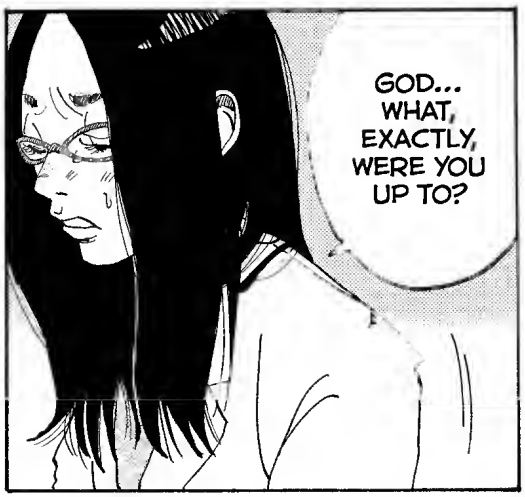
I'M A PIANIST. THEY CALL ME BABY.
BZZZ BZZZ

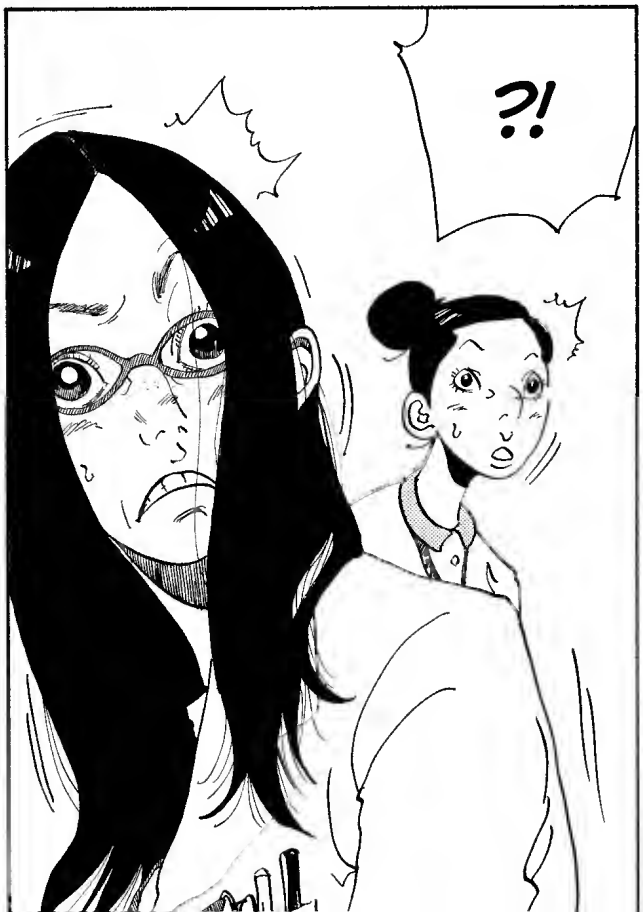
BZZZ BZZZ

AND I'M ALSO...

PERSONA
SHIMOYA!
...AN OB/GYN. THEY CALL ME SAKURA KOUNOTORI.

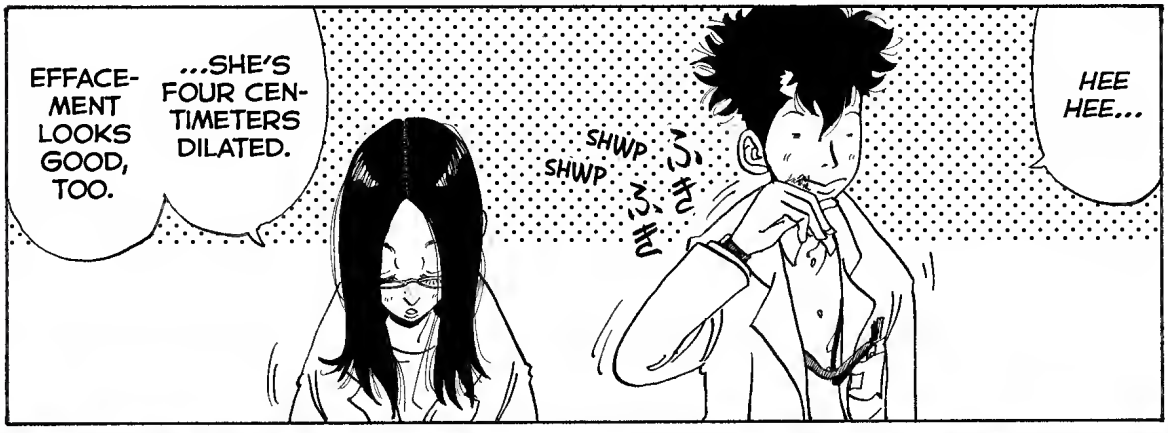
OH! DR. KOUNO—
HOW'S KAWAMURA-SAN DOING?

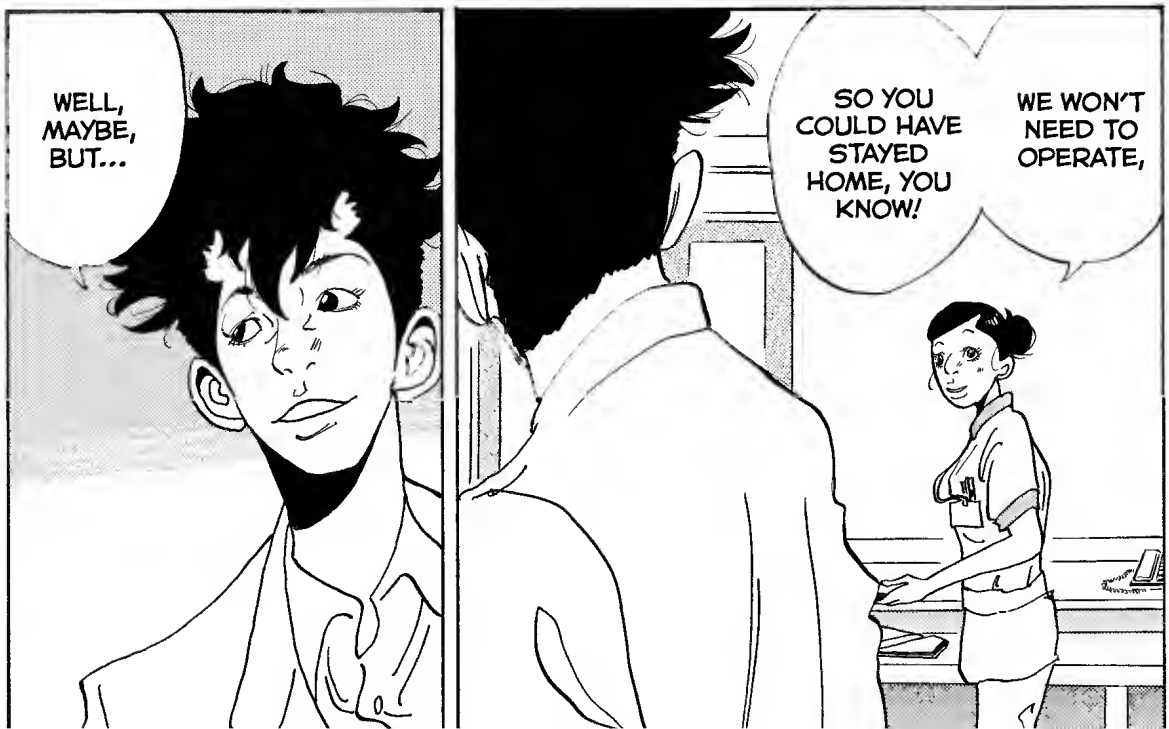

GOD... WHAT, EXACTLY, WERE YOU UP TO?

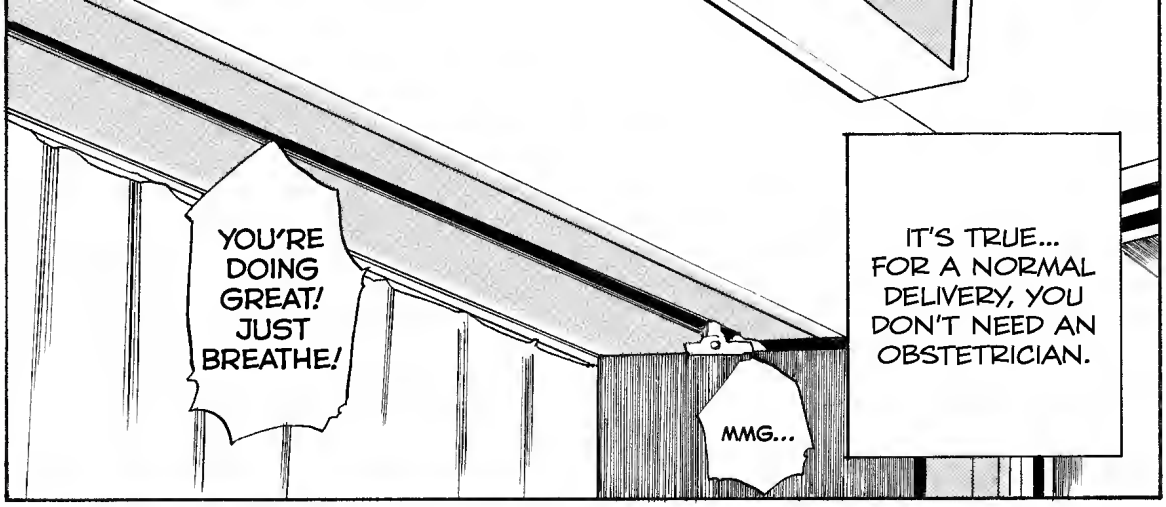

?!

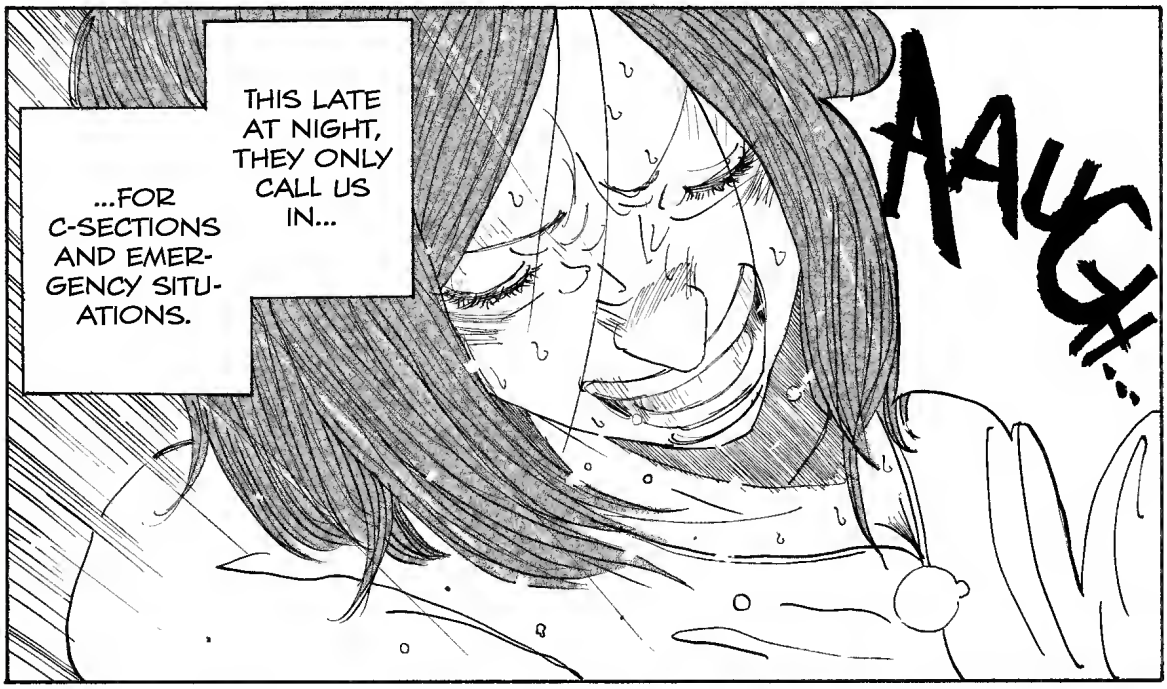
SHIMO-YA? HEY!
...
IS— IS SOME-THING WRONG?

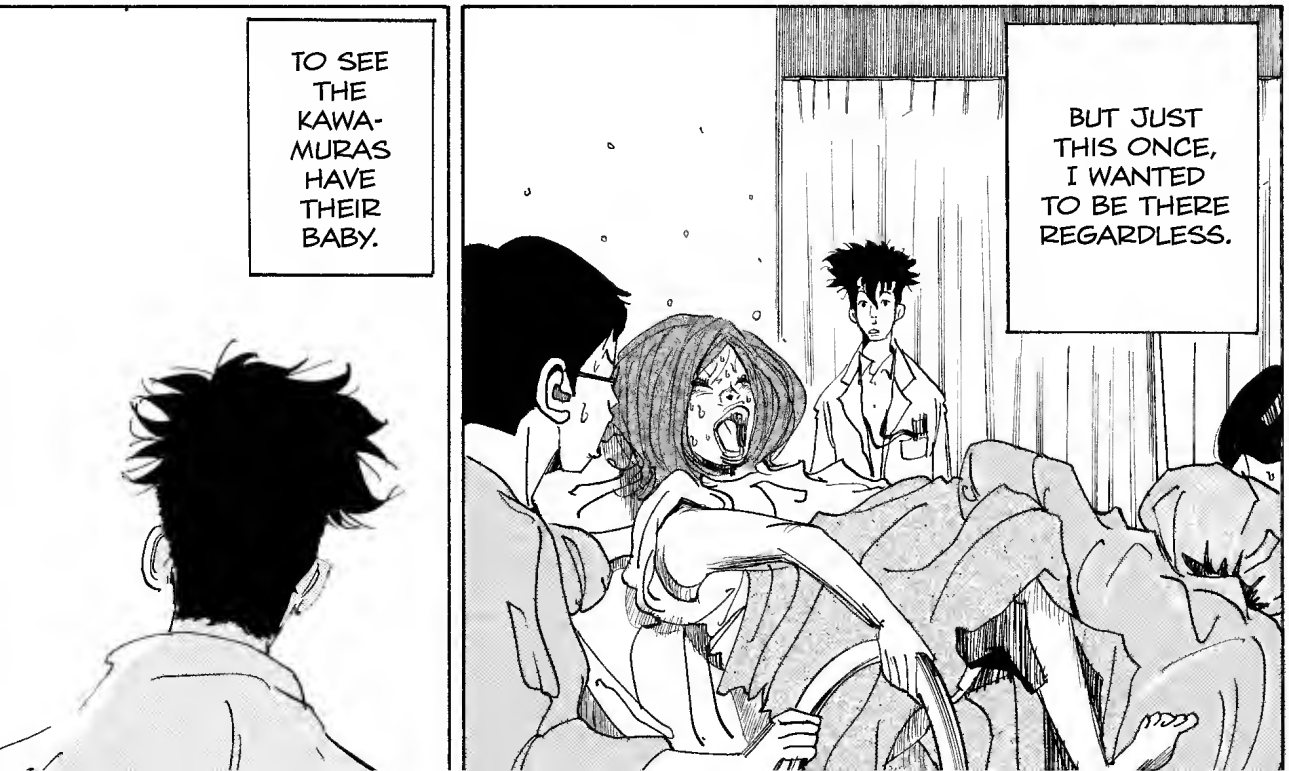
WH...
DOCTOR... YOU MISSED A SPOT.


EFFACE-MENT LOOKS GOOD, TOO.
...SHE'S FOUR CEN-TIMETERS DILATED.
SHWP SHWP
ふき ふき
HEE HEE...

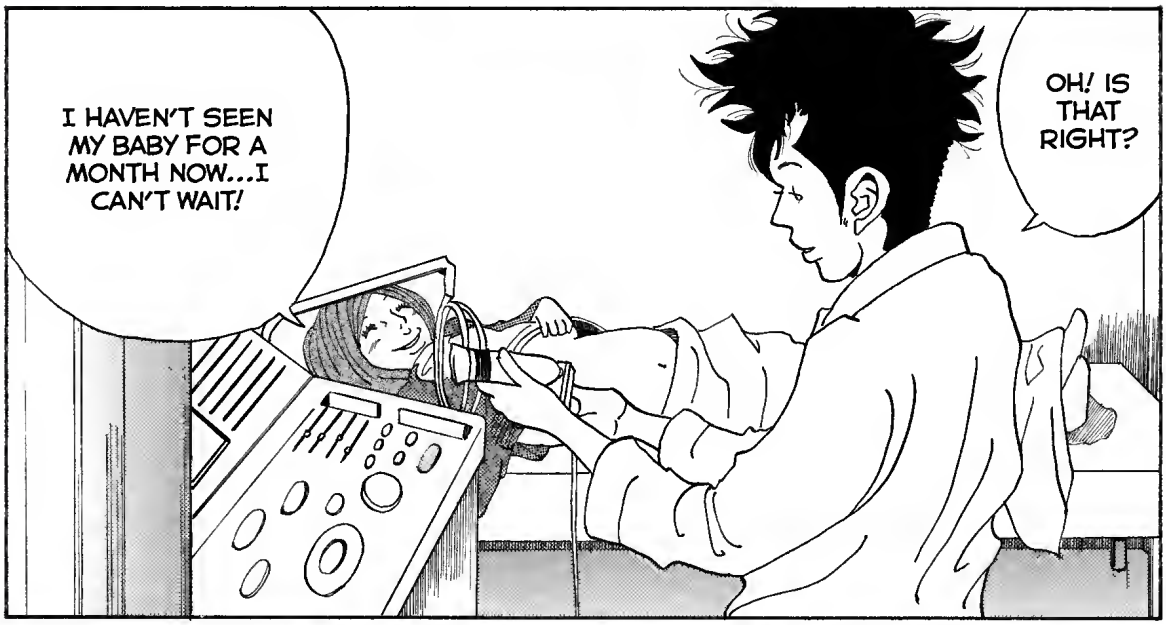

WELL, MAYBE, BUT...
SO YOU COULD HAVE STAYED HOME, YOU KNOW!
WE WON'T NEED TO OPERATE,

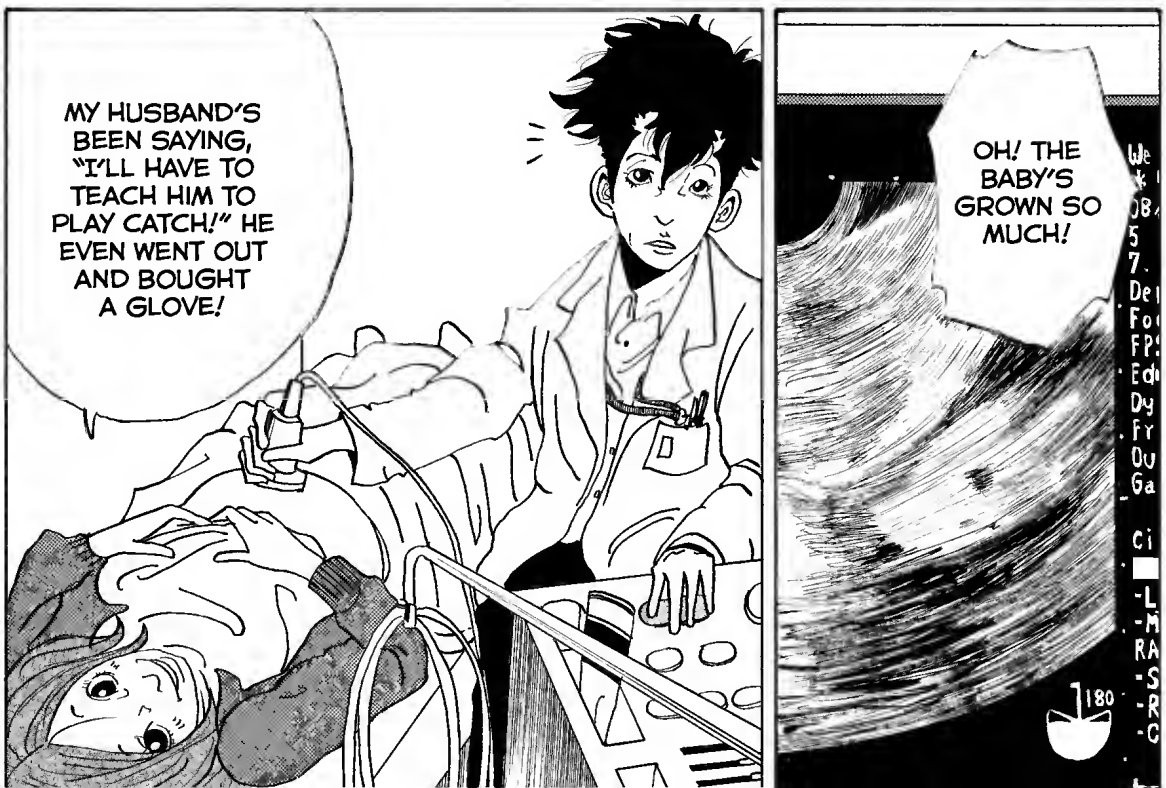

YOU'RE DOING GREAT! JUST BREATHE!
MMG...
IT'S TRUE... FOR A NORMAL DELIVERY, YOU DON'T NEED AN OBSTETRICIAN.


THIS LATE AT NIGHT, THEY ONLY CALL US IN...
...FOR C-SECTIONS AND EMERGENCY SITUATIONS.
AAUGH...

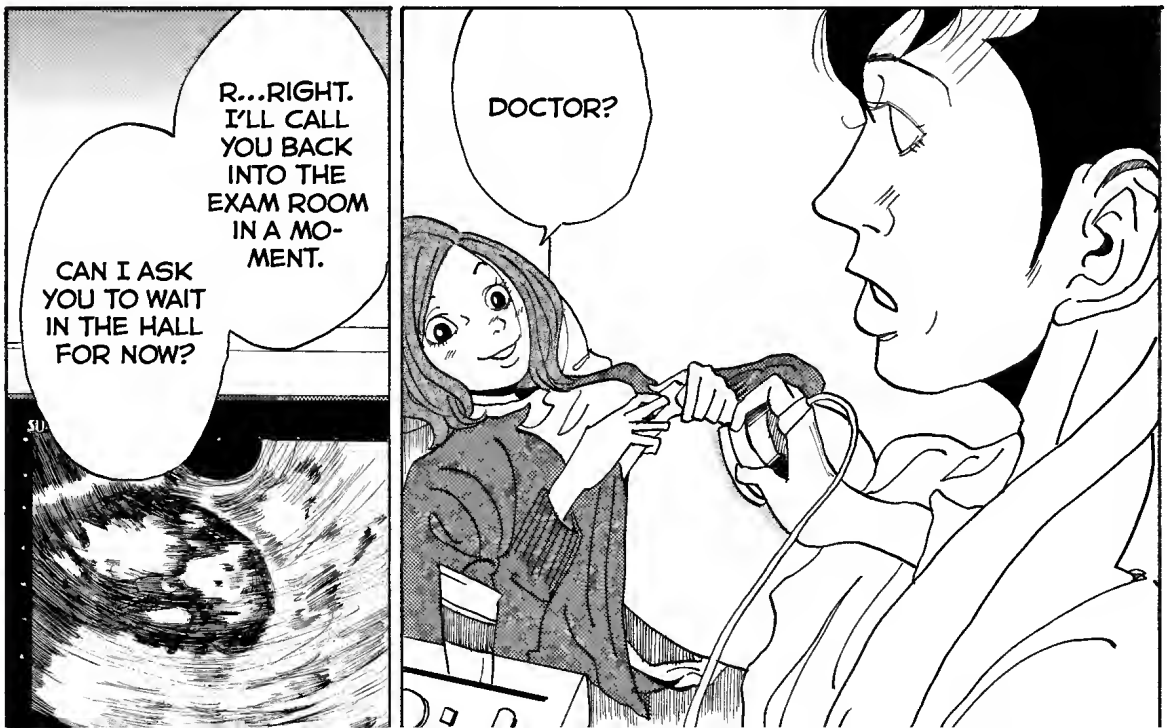

TO SEE THE KAWAMURAS HAVE THEIR BABY.
BUT JUST THIS ONCE, I WANTED TO BE THERE REGARDLESS.

I FELT THE BABY START TO KICK ABOUT THREE DAYS AGO!
TWO YEARS AGO...

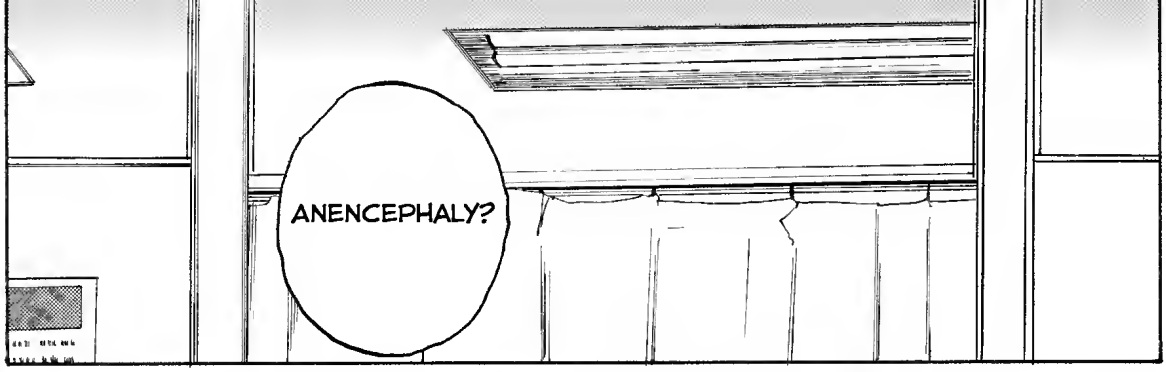

I HAVEN'T SEEN MY BABY FOR A MONTH NOW...I CAN'T WAIT!
OH! IS THAT RIGHT?


MY HUSBAND'S BEEN SAYING, "I'LL HAVE TO TEACH HIM TO PLAY CATCH!" HE EVEN WENT OUT AND BOUGHT A GLOVE!
OH! THE BABY'S GROWN SO MUCH!

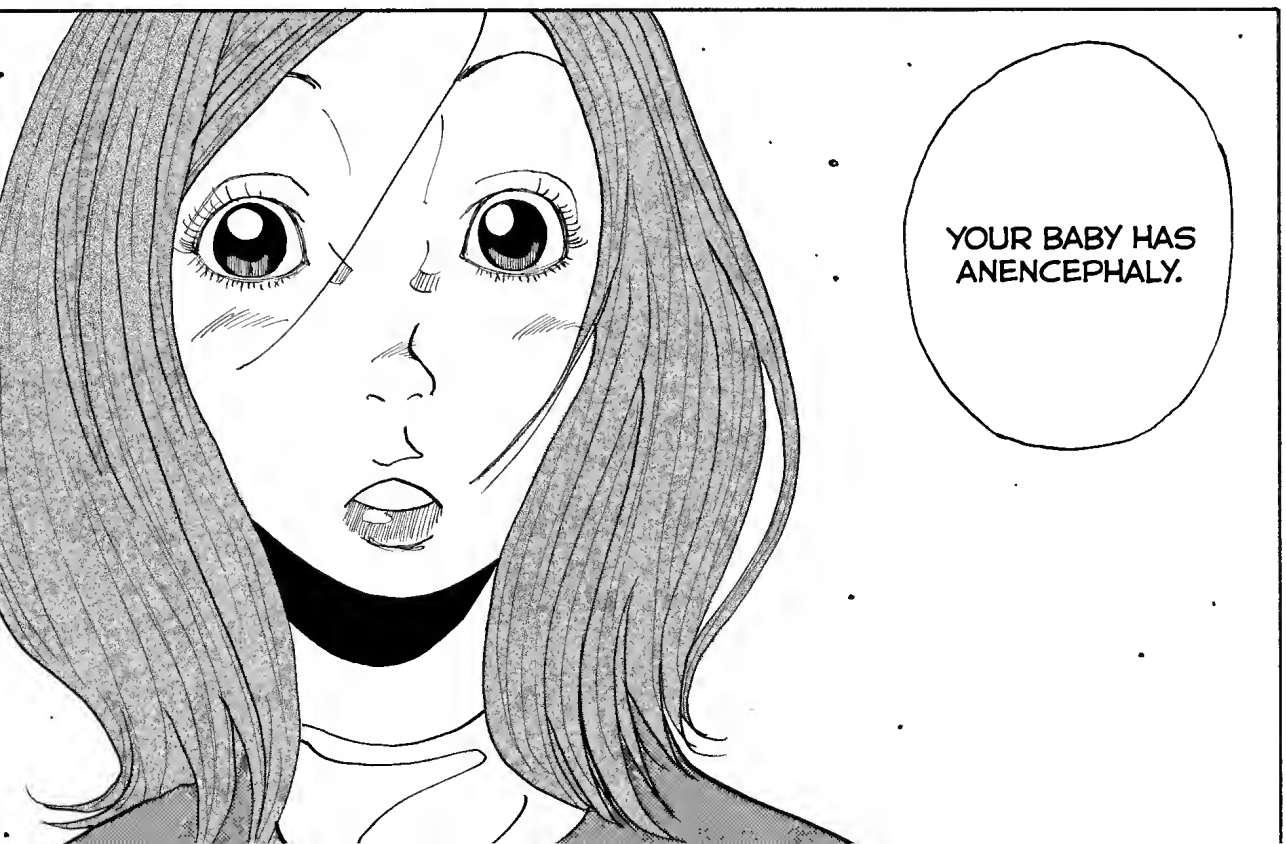
AND HERE WE STILL DON'T KNOW WHETHER IT'S A BOY OR A GIRL!
...


R...RIGHT. I'LL CALL YOU BACK INTO THE EXAM ROOM IN A MO-MENT.
CAN I ASK YOU TO WAIT IN THE HALL FOR NOW?
DOCTOR?

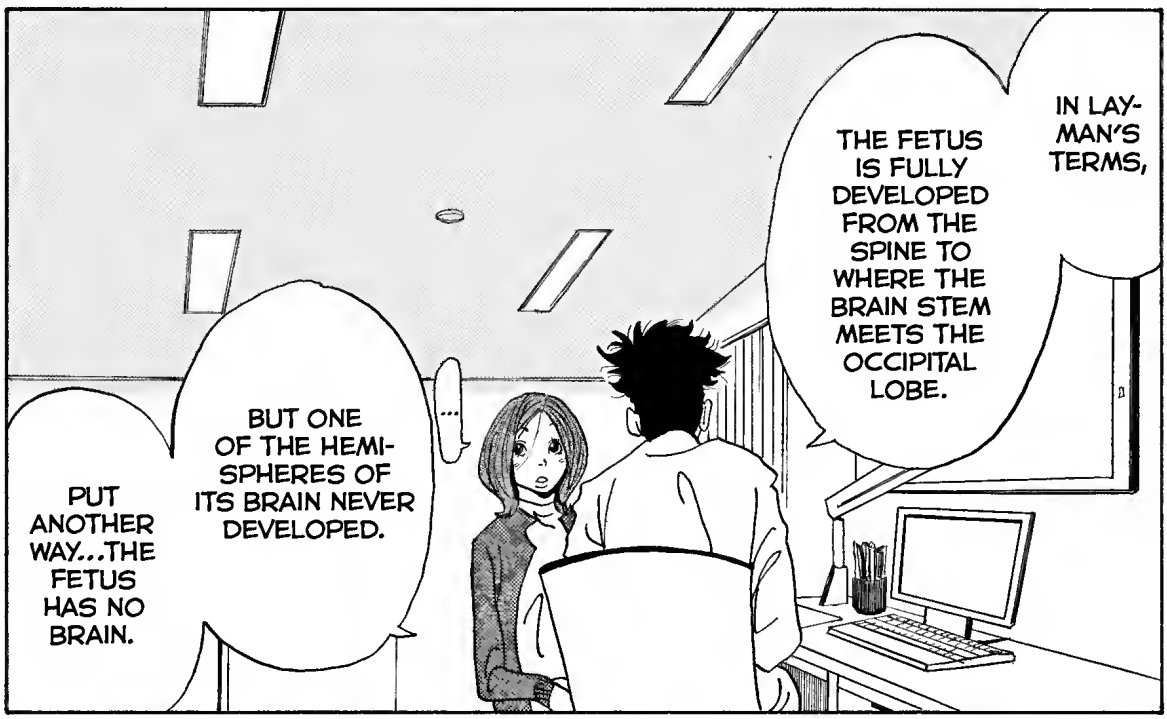
I made poopy...
...
ALL RIGHT... CALL HER IN.
PSHH

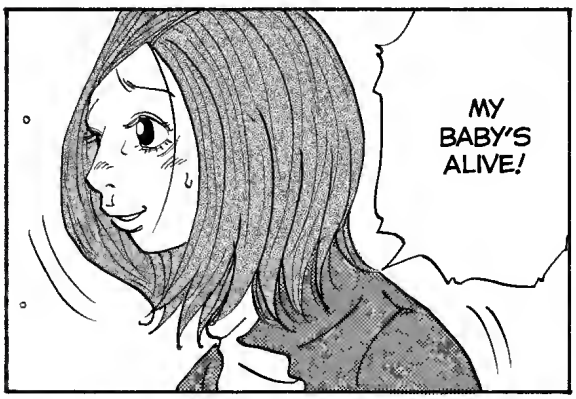

ANENCEPHALY?

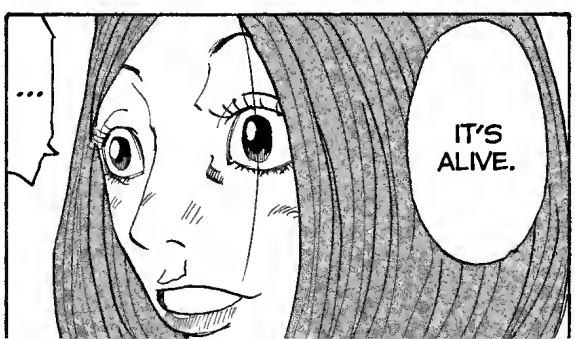
THAT'S RIGHT... THERE'S NO DOUBT IN MY MIND, KAWAMURA-SAN.

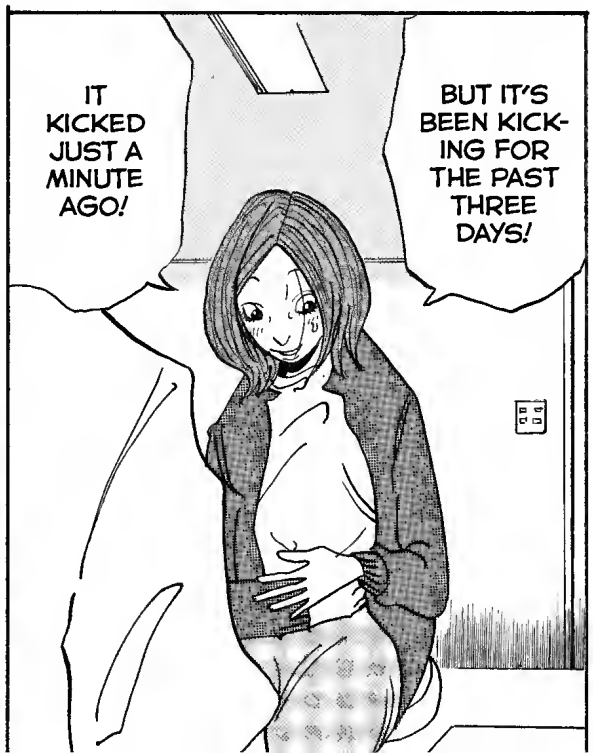

YOUR BABY HAS ANENCEPHALY.

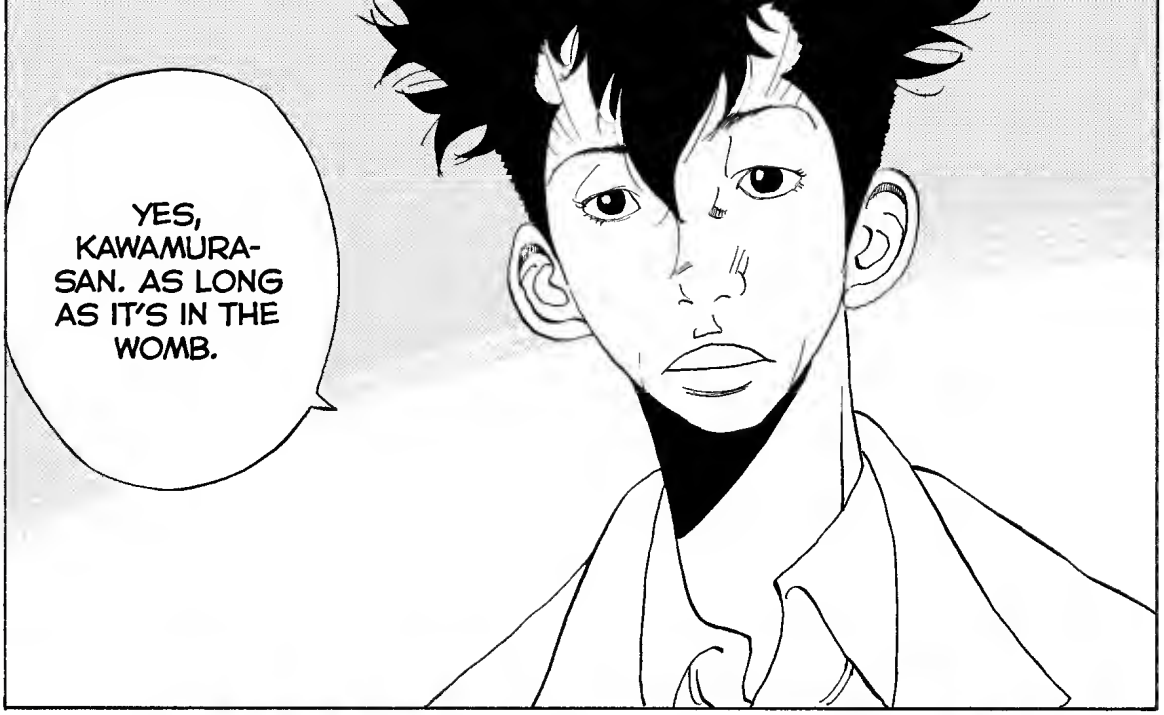
IT'S A SUBSET OF MCD...OR, "MALFORMATIONS OF CORTICAL DEVELOPMENT."

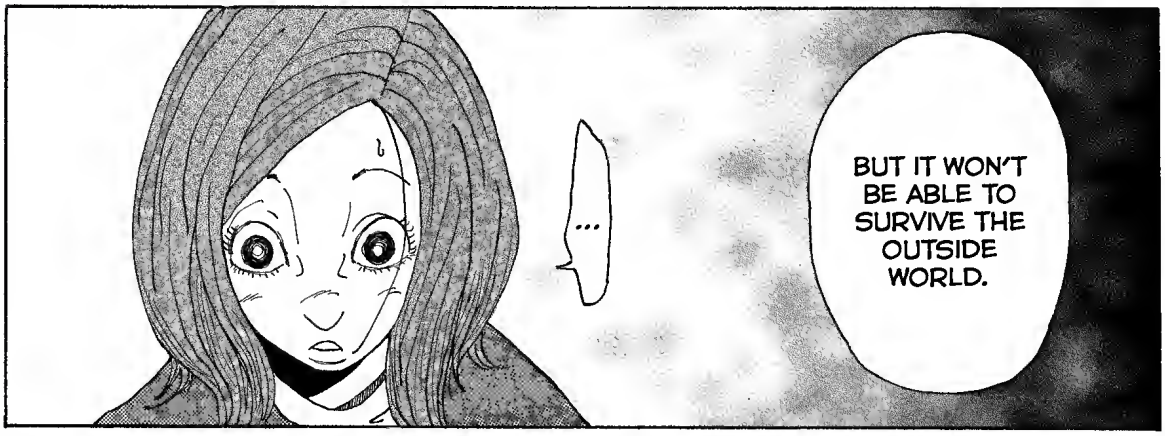

IN LAYMAN'S TERMS,
THE FETUS IS FULLY DEVELOPED FROM THE SPINE TO WHERE THE BRAIN STEM MEETS THE OCCIPITAL LOBE.
...
BUT ONE OF THE HEMISPHERES OF ITS BRAIN NEVER DEVELOPED.
PUT ANOTHER WAY...THE FETUS HAS NO BRAIN.

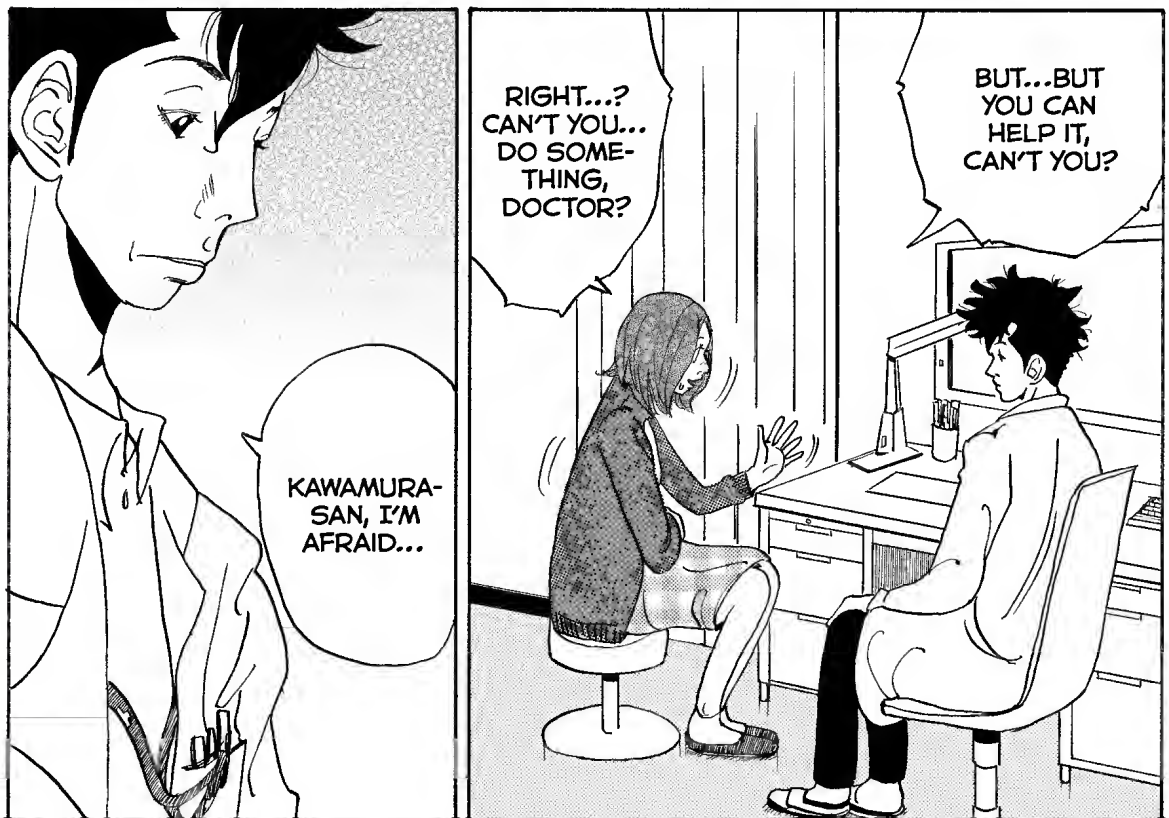

MY BABY'S ALIVE!


...
IT'S ALIVE.

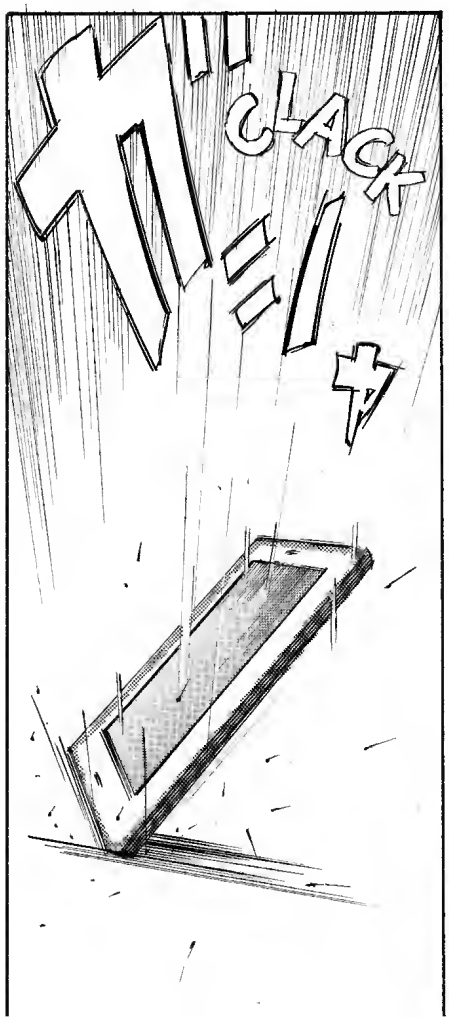

IT KICKED JUST A MINUTE AGO!
BUT IT'S BEEN KICKING FOR THE PAST THREE DAYS!

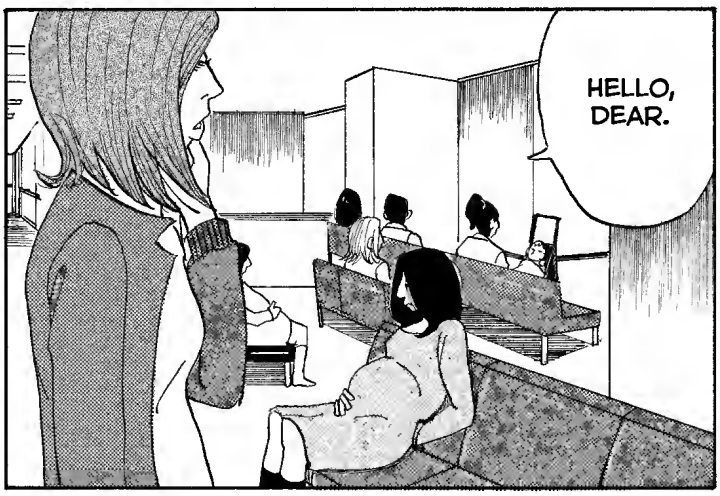

YES, KAWAMURA-SAN. AS LONG AS IT'S IN THE WOMB.

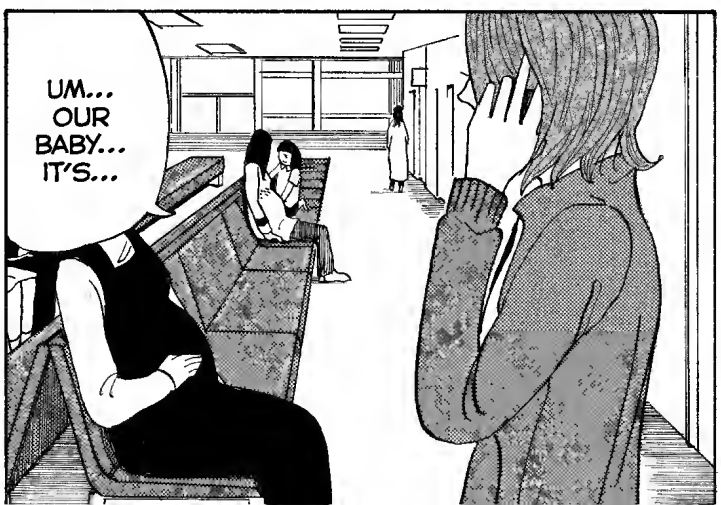

BUT IT WON'T BE ABLE TO SURVIVE THE OUTSIDE WORLD.
...

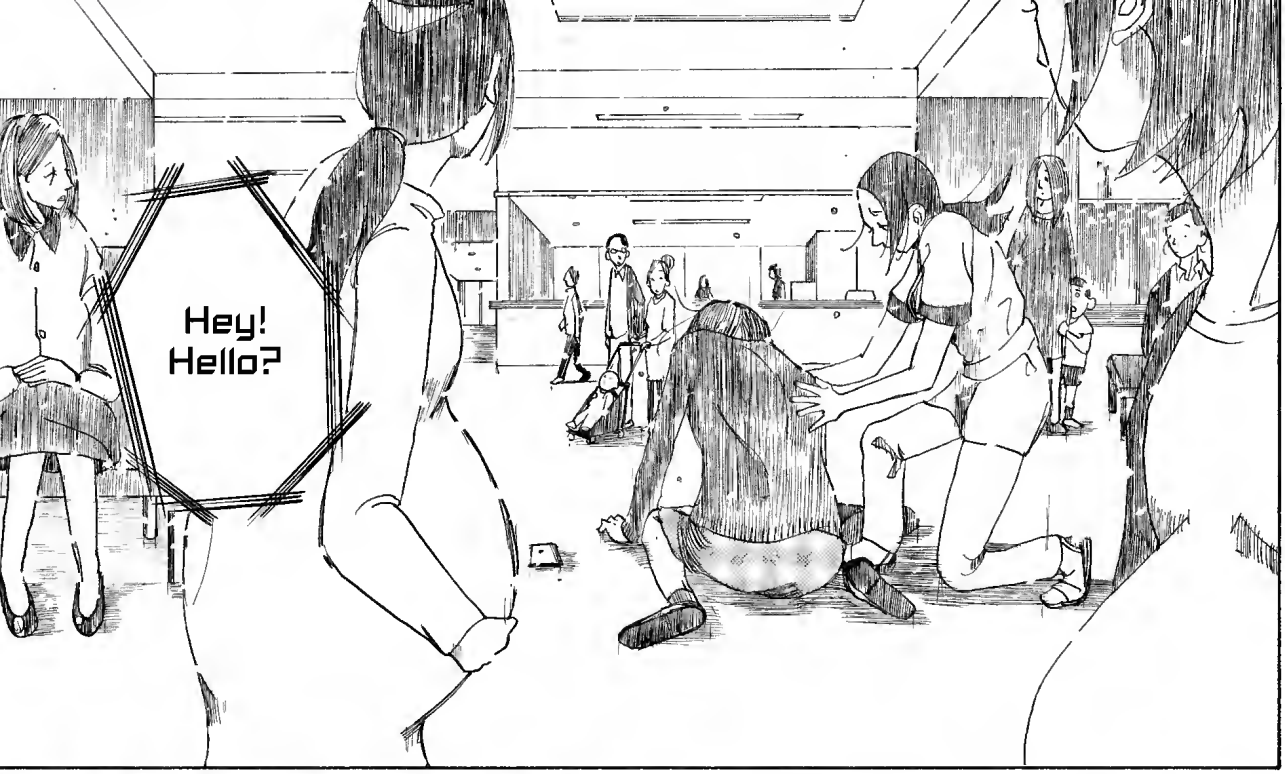

BUT...BUT YOU CAN HELP IT, CAN'T YOU?
RIGHT...? CAN'T YOU... DO SOME-THING, DOCTOR?
KAWAMURA-SAN, I'M AFRAID...

...
Hello? You all done with your checkup?
...THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO.

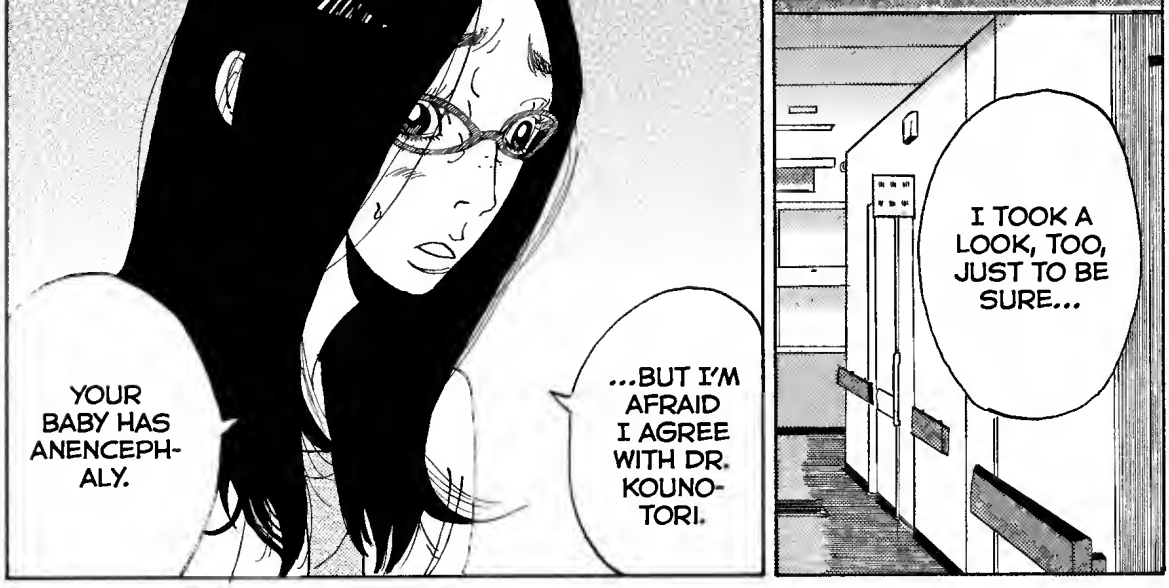

CLACK

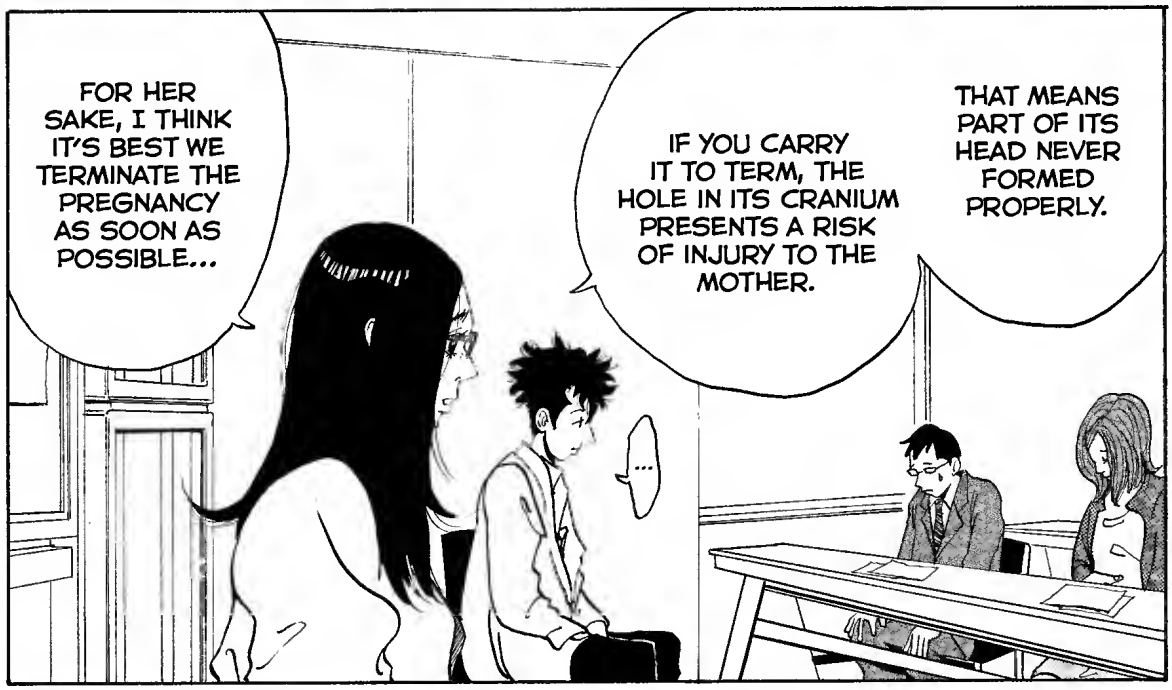

HELLO, DEAR.

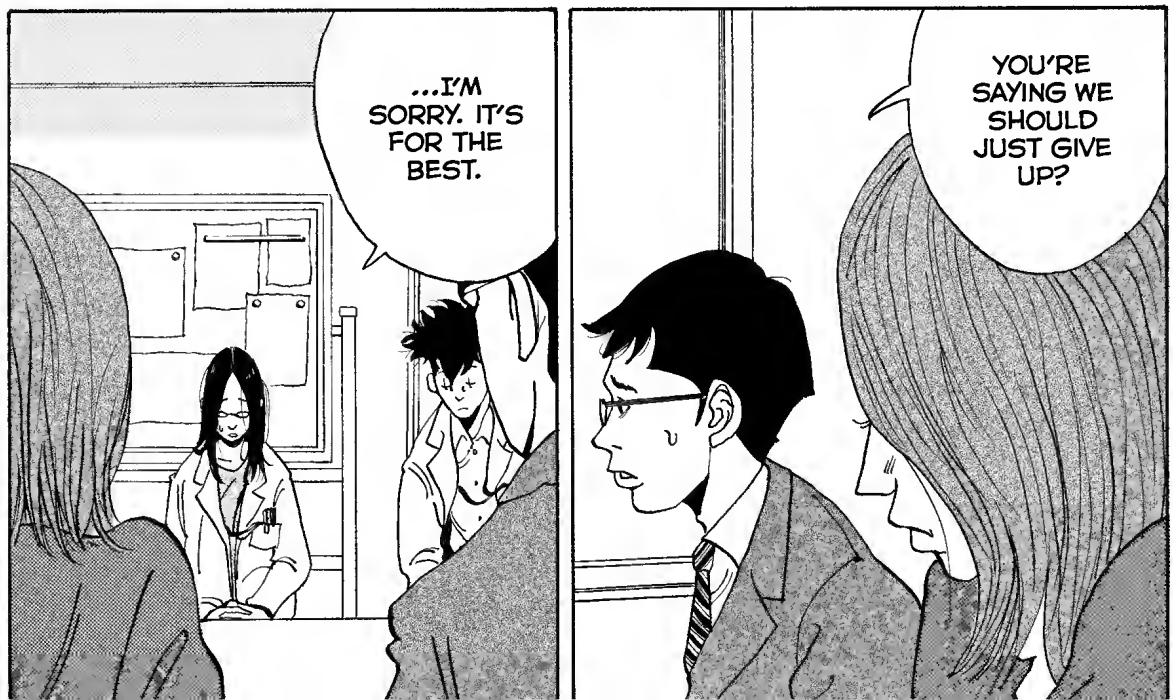

UM... OUR BABY... IT'S...

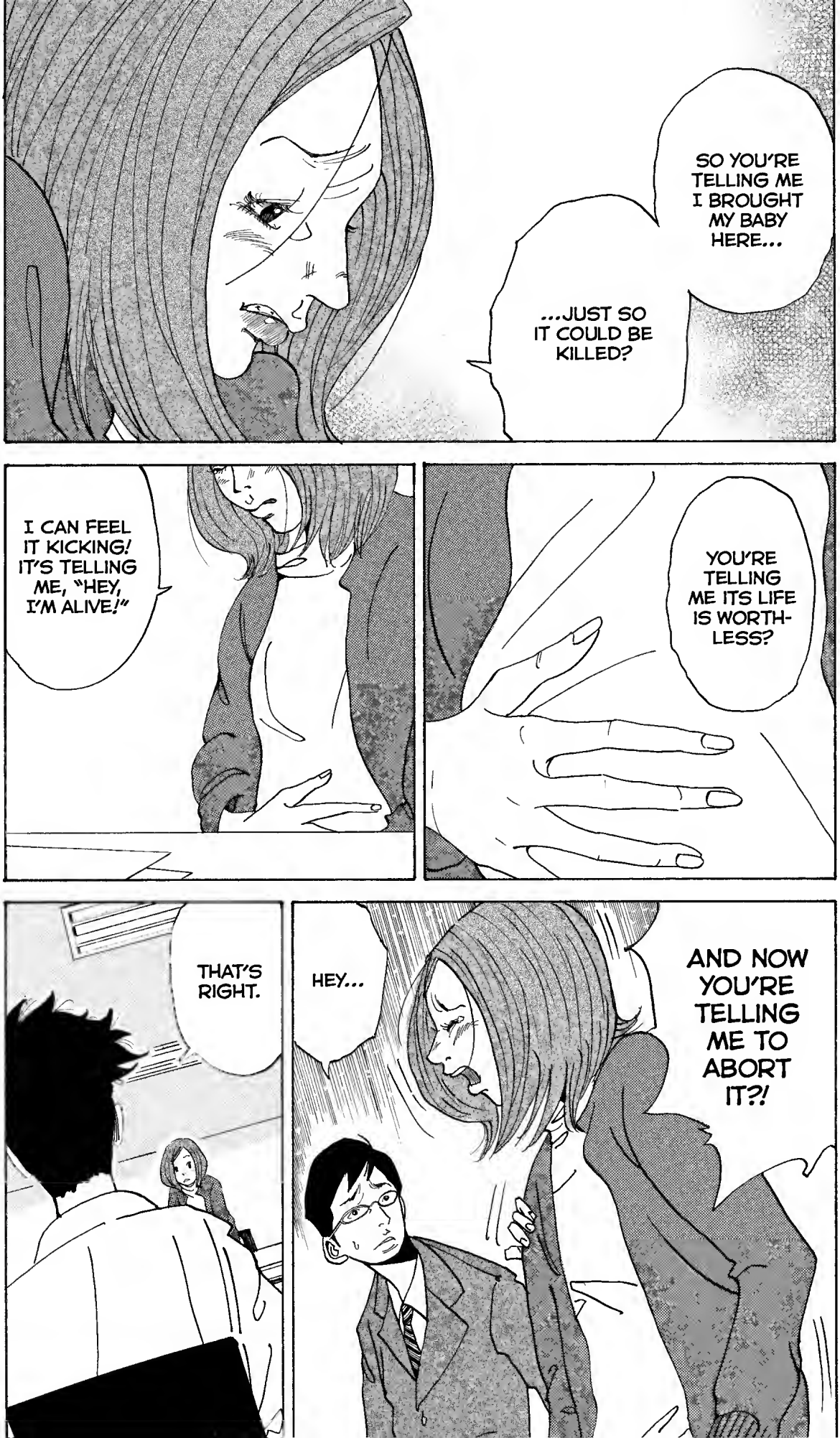

Hey!
Hello?

What's
wrong?
Hey!!

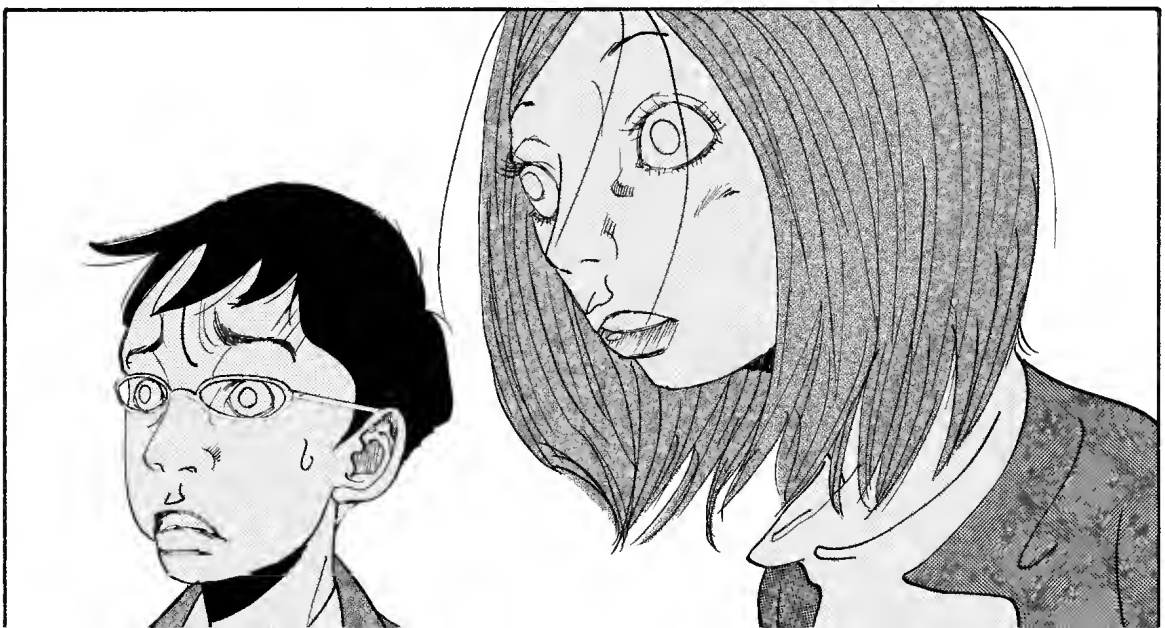

YOUR BABY HAS ANENCEPH-ALY.
...BUT I'M AFRAID I AGREE WITH DR. KOUNO-TORI.
I TOOK A LOOK, TOO, JUST TO BE SURE...


FOR HER SAKE, I THINK IT'S BEST WE TERMINATE THE PREGNANCY AS SOON AS POSSIBLE...
IF YOU CARRY IT TO TERM, THE HOLE IN ITS CRANIUM PRESENTS A RISK OF INJURY TO THE MOTHER.
THAT MEANS PART OF ITS HEAD NEVER FORMED PROPERLY.
...

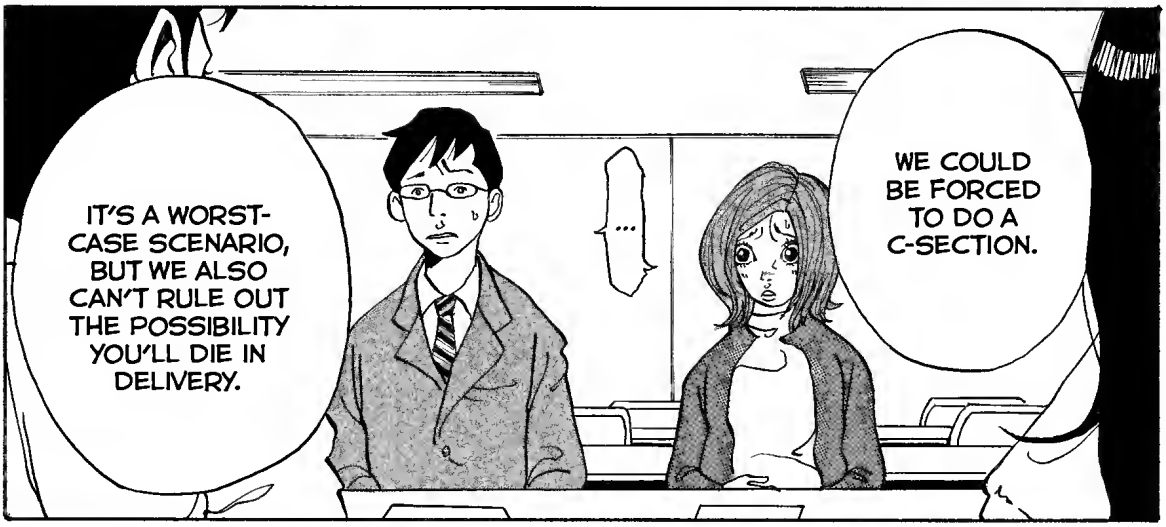

...I'M SORRY. IT'S FOR THE BEST.
YOU'RE SAYING WE SHOULD JUST GIVE UP?

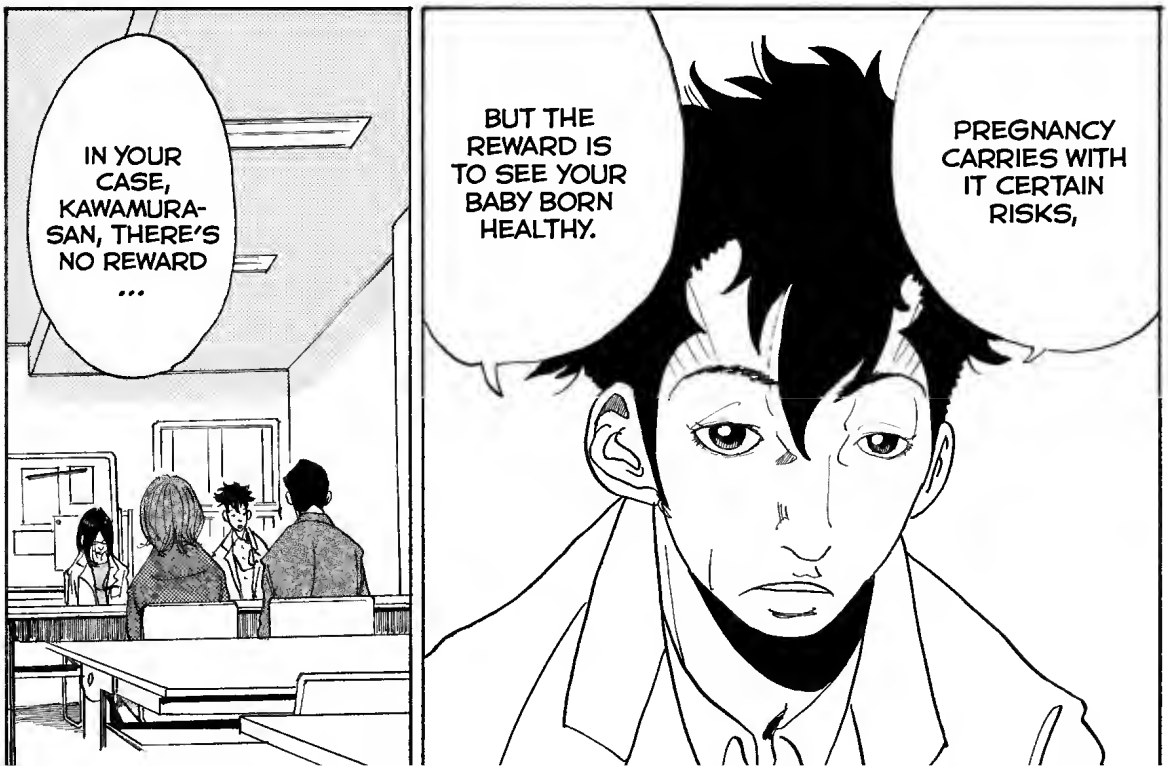

SO YOU'RE TELLING ME I BROUGHT MY BABY HERE...
...JUST SO IT COULD BE KILLED?
I CAN FEEL IT KICKING! IT'S TELLING ME, "HEY, I'M ALIVE!"
YOU'RE TELLING ME ITS LIFE IS WORTH-LESS?
THAT'S RIGHT.
HEY...
AND NOW YOU'RE TELLING ME TO ABORT IT?!

YOU MUST INDUCE ABORTION FOR THE BABY INSIDE YOU.



THE LONGER YOU LET YOUR PREGNANCY CONTINUE...
...THE GREATER RISK IT POSES.


WE COULD BE FORCED TO DO A C-SECTION.
...
IT'S A WORST-CASE SCENARIO, BUT WE ALSO CAN'T RULE OUT THE POSSIBILITY YOU'LL DIE IN DELIVERY.

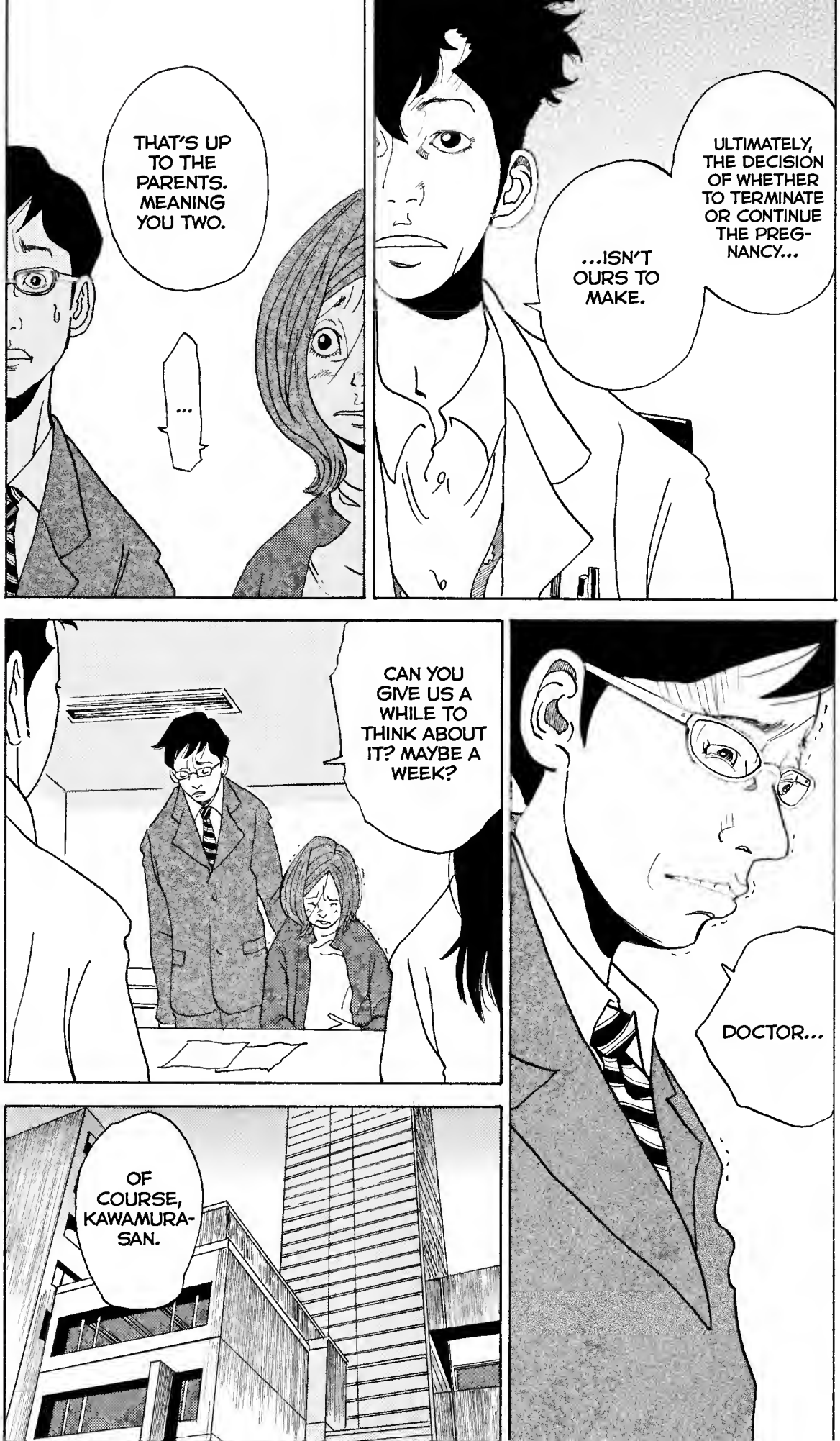

PREGNANCY CARRIES WITH IT CERTAIN RISKS,
BUT THE REWARD IS TO SEE YOUR BABY BORN HEALTHY.
IN YOUR CASE, KAWAMURA-SAN, THERE'S NO REWARD ...

...JUST RISK.

SO YOU'RE SAYING WE DON'T HAVE ANY CHOICE?

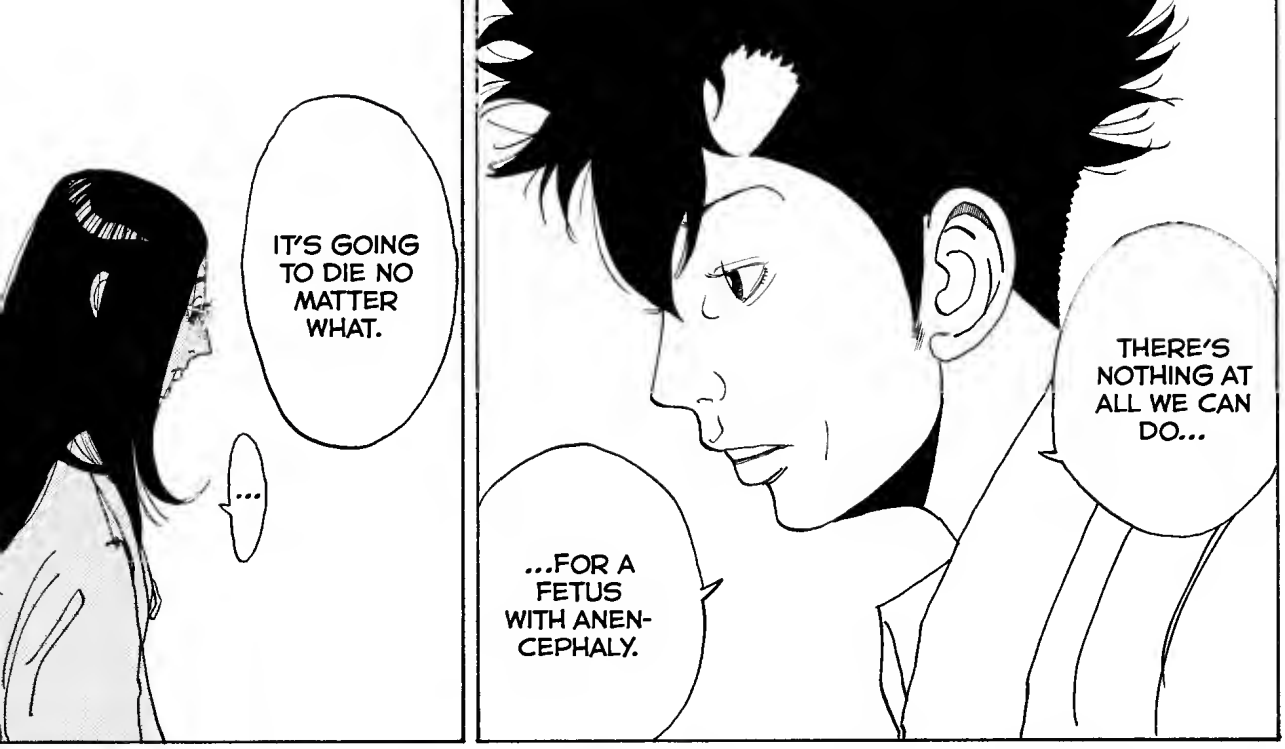
WE'VE ACCOUNTED FOR ALL FACTORS.
THAT'S OUR MEDICAL OPINION.

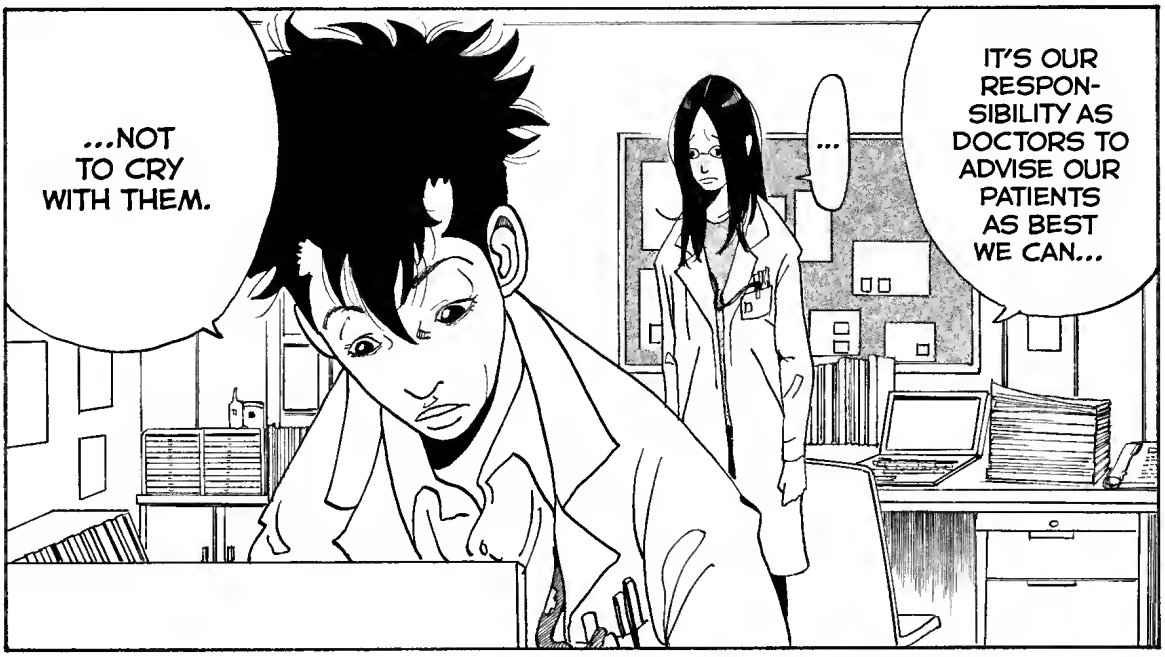
NOT EX-ACTLY.


ULTIMATELY, THE DECISION OF WHETHER TO TERMINATE OR CONTINUE THE PREG-NANCY...
...ISN'T OURS TO MAKE.
THAT'S UP TO THE PARENTS. MEANING YOU TWO.
...
DOCTOR...
CAN YOU GIVE US A WHILE TO THINK ABOUT IT? MAYBE A WEEK?
OF COURSE, KAWAMURA-SAN.

DO YOU THINK THEY'RE GOING TO BE ALL RIGHT? THE KAWA-MURAS?

NO, SHIMOYA. THERE ISN'T.
ISN'T THERE ANY-THING WE CAN DO?
...


IT'S GOING TO DIE NO MATTER WHAT.
...
...FOR A FETUS WITH ANEN-CEPHALY.
THERE'S NOTHING AT ALL WE CAN DO...


...NOT TO CRY WITH THEM.
...
IT'S OUR RESPON-SIBILITY AS DOCTORS TO ADVISE OUR PATIENTS AS BEST WE CAN...

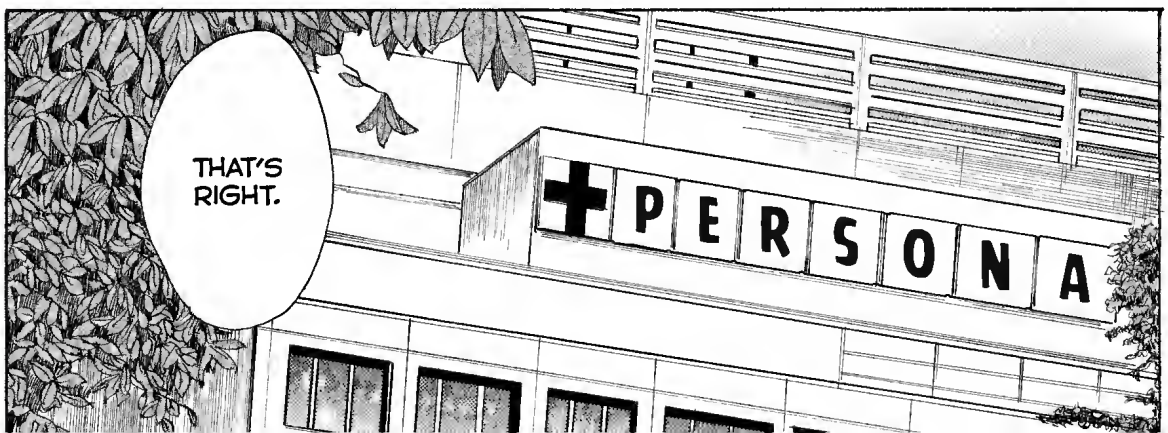
...ALL BY THEM-SELVES?
SO, THE KAWAMURAS HAVE TO SUFFER THROUGH THEIR SOR-ROW...

THAT'S RIGHT.

THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN DO.

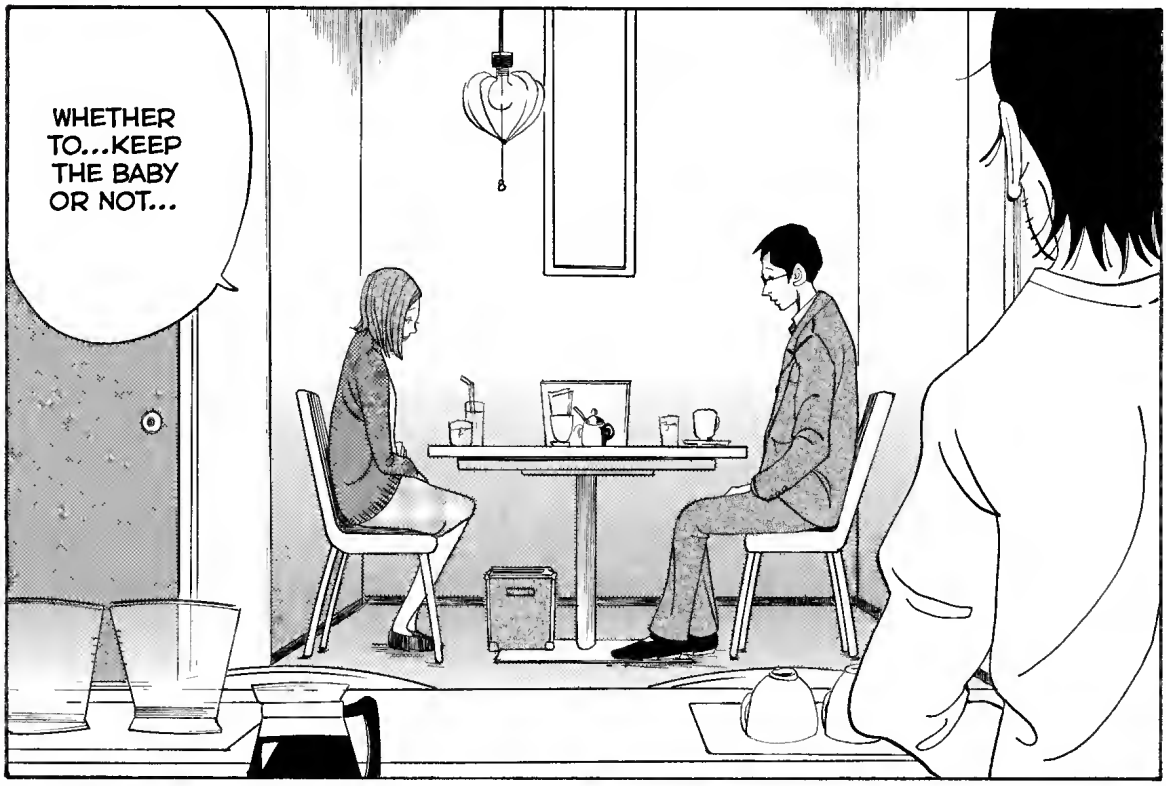
THE PARENTS OF THE BABIES WE CAN'T SAVE MIGHT HAVE TIME FOR SORROW...
...BUT AS DOCTORS, WE DON'T.

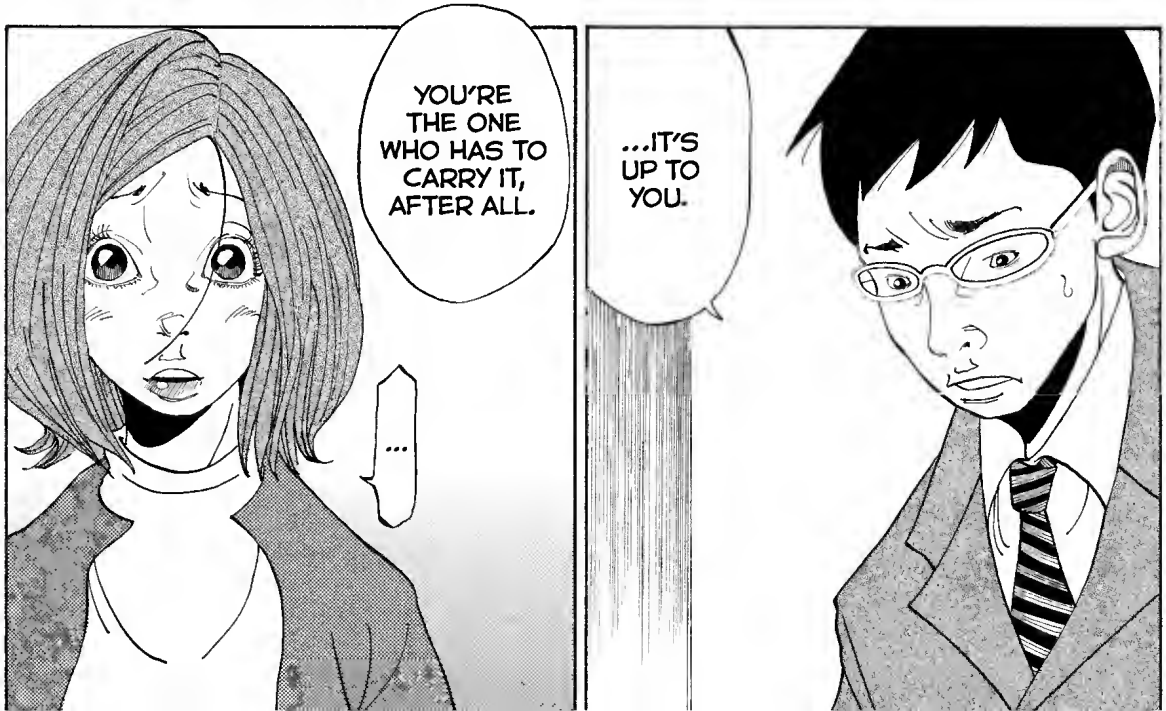
SO, THE KAWAMURAS HAVE TO SUFFER THROUGH THEIR SORROW...
...ALL BY THEMSELVES?


THAT'S RIGHT.
PERSONA

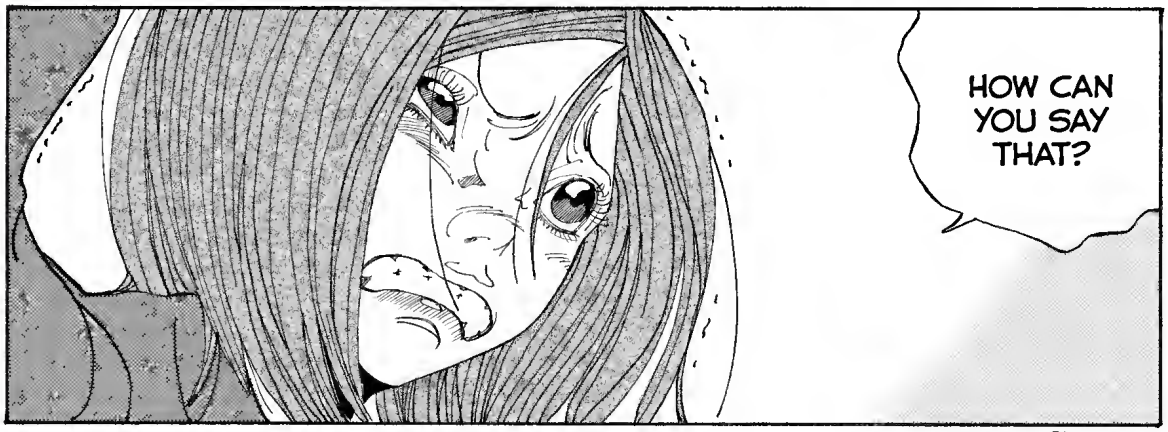
THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN DO.

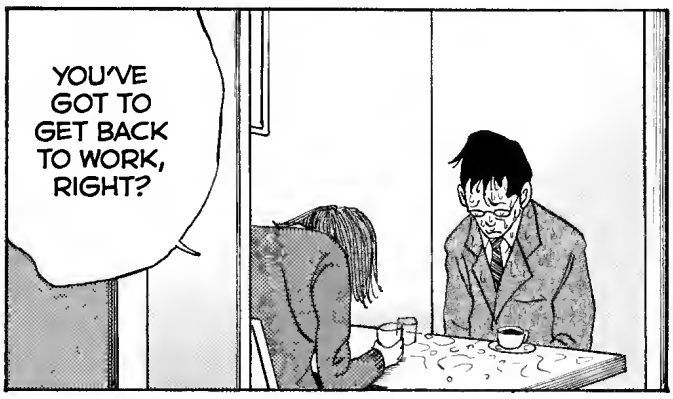
COFFEE
Morgan
Cafe
HOW ARE WE SUPPOSED TO MAKE THAT KIND OF DECISION ALL BY OURSELVES?


WHETHER TO...KEEP THE BABY OR NOT...


YOU'RE THE ONE WHO HAS TO CARRY IT, AFTER ALL.
...
...IT'S UP TO YOU.

?!
SPLOSH
バシャッ


HOW CAN YOU SAY THAT?


YOU'VE GOT TO GET BACK TO WORK, RIGHT?

...
IT'S OUR BABY, YOU KNOW!

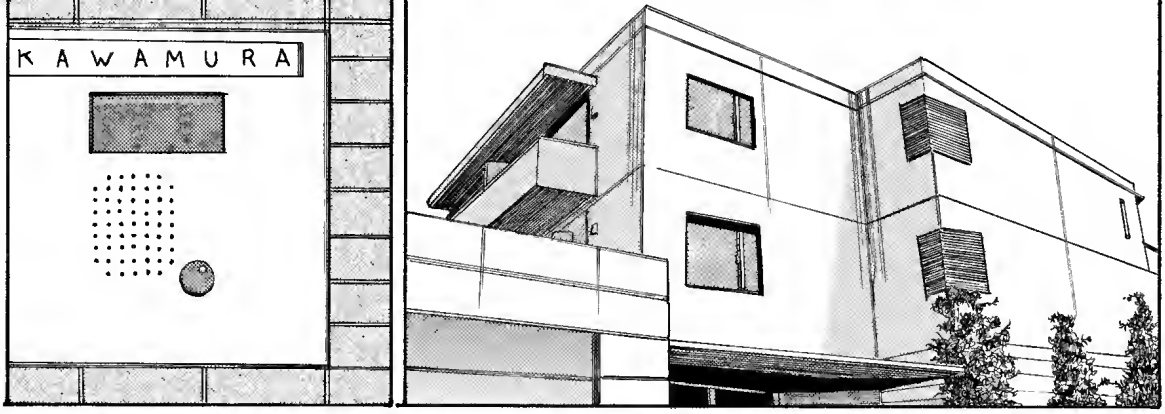
I'LL BE FINE. JUST GO.

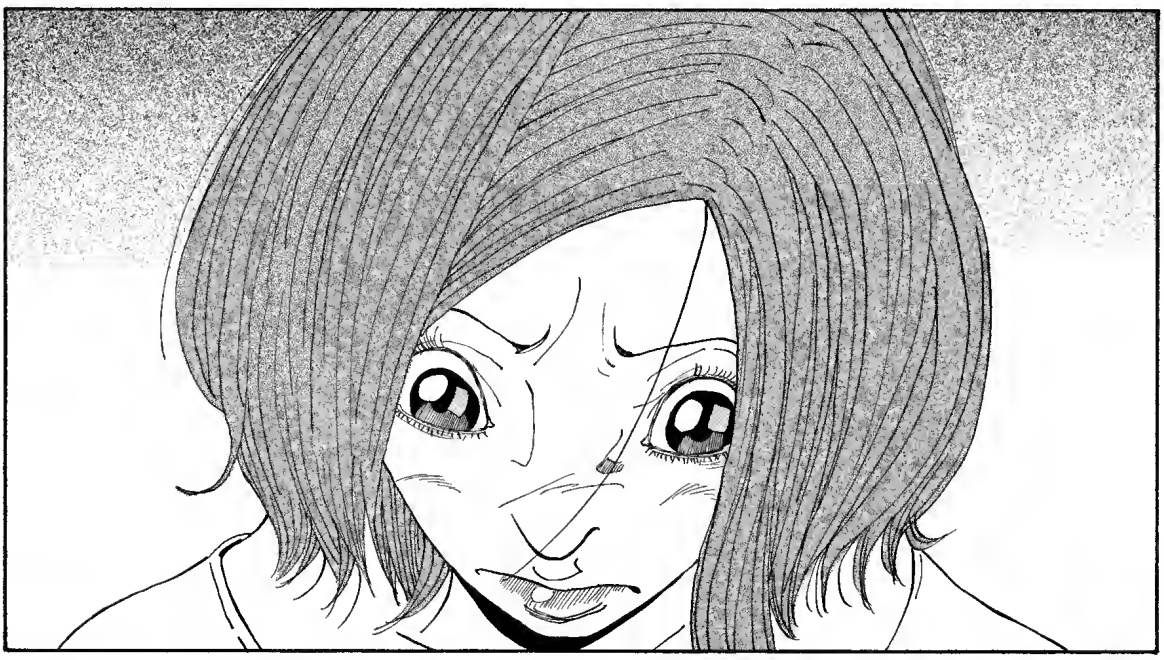
YES. IT'S A GIRL.
UGH... OH, NO!
YOU'RE... YOU'RE TOTALLY SURE, DOCTOR?
NOT ANOTH-ER...! MY TWO OLD-EST ARE GIRLS!
I'LL NEVER HEAR THE END OF IT FROM MY MOTHER-IN-LAW!
IT'S HEALTHY, FOR GOD'S SAKE...
WHAT ...?
YOU MIGHT AS WELL TELL ME I'M ON DEATH ROW!

CHEER UP, MA'AM! AT LEAST YOUR BABY'S IN GOOD HEALTH!

W...WELL, SURE...

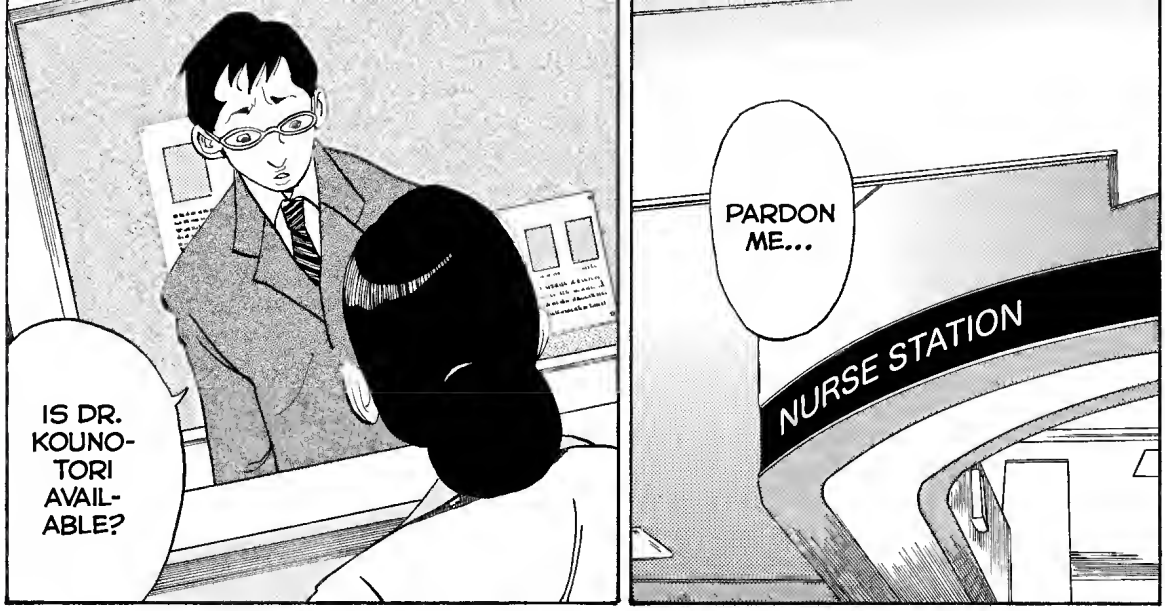
I GUESS THAT'S THE MOST IMPORTANT THING...
PERSONA
DEPARTMENTS
PEDIATRICS
OBSTETRICS
MATERNITY
INTERNAL MEDICINE

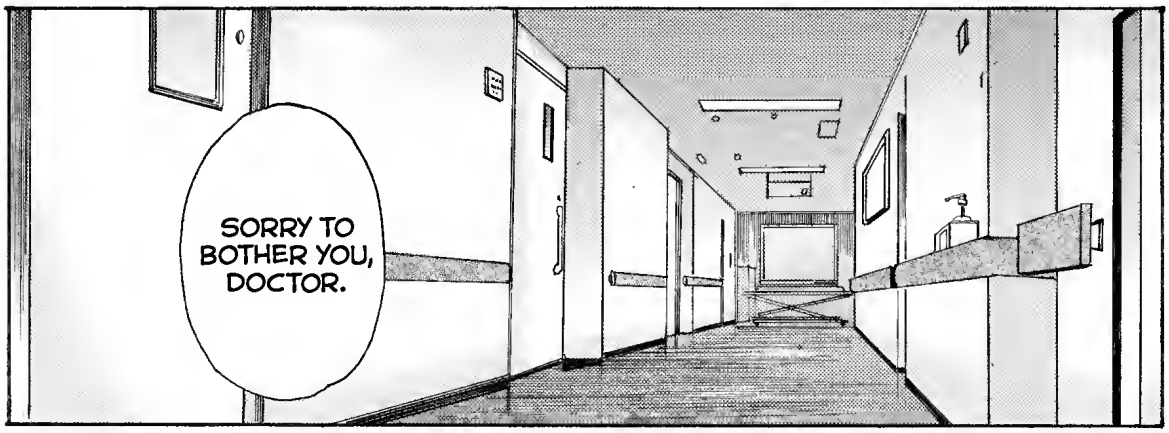




The majority of children with anencephaly are stillborn. Those who survive delivery can live another 1 to 2 weeks, depending on their brain function. There are no known treatments for anencephaly.

There are no known treatments for anencephaly.

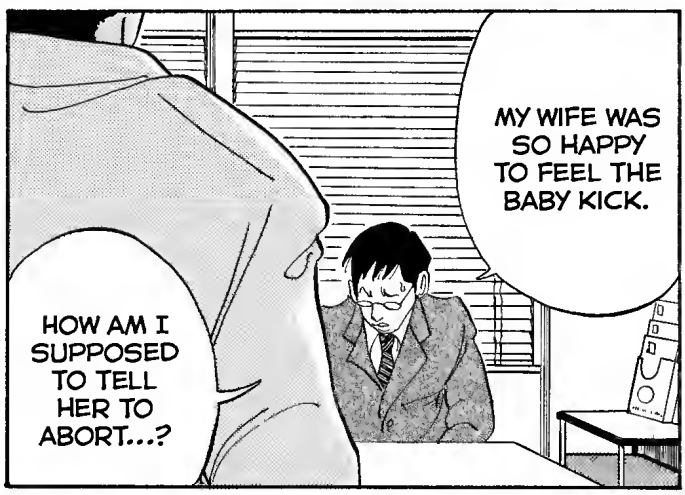

IS DR. KOUNO-TORI AVAIL-ABLE?
PARDON ME...
NURSE STATION


SORRY TO BOTHER YOU, DOCTOR.

DOCTOR ...
EVER SINCE I HEARD OUR BABY HAD NO CHANCE OF SURVIVAL...
WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU?

ALL I'VE WANTED IS FOR MY WIFE TO TELL ME...
...THAT SHE'S READY TO GIVE IT UP.

I KNOW IT'S SELF-ISH OF ME...
...

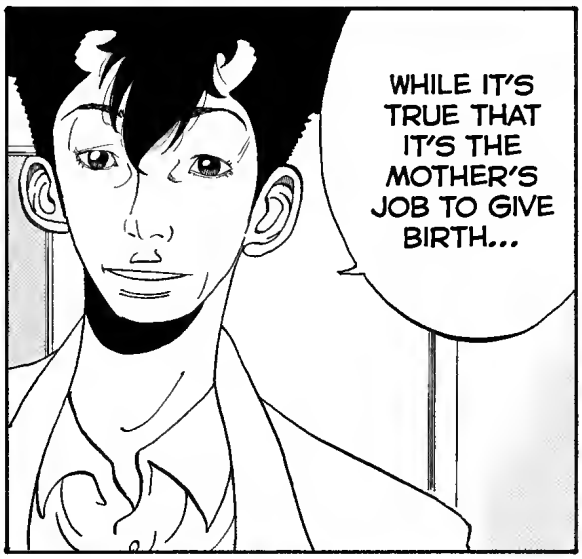

MY WIFE WAS SO HAPPY TO FEEL THE BABY KICK.
HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO TELL HER TO ABORT...?

...BUT MY WIFE MEANS MORE TO ME!

BUT...MAYBE I'LL NEVER GET TO SEE MY BABY'S FACE...

LOOK... I'M SINGLE, SO I WON'T CLAIM TO KNOW WHAT YOU'RE GOING THROUGH.
...
BUT I HAVE MET AN AWFUL LOT OF BABIES AND PARENTS.

...IT'S THE FATHER'S JOB TO HELP HER THROUGH THE PREG-NANCY AND DELIVERY.
...


WHILE IT'S TRUE THAT IT'S THE MOTHER'S JOB TO GIVE BIRTH...

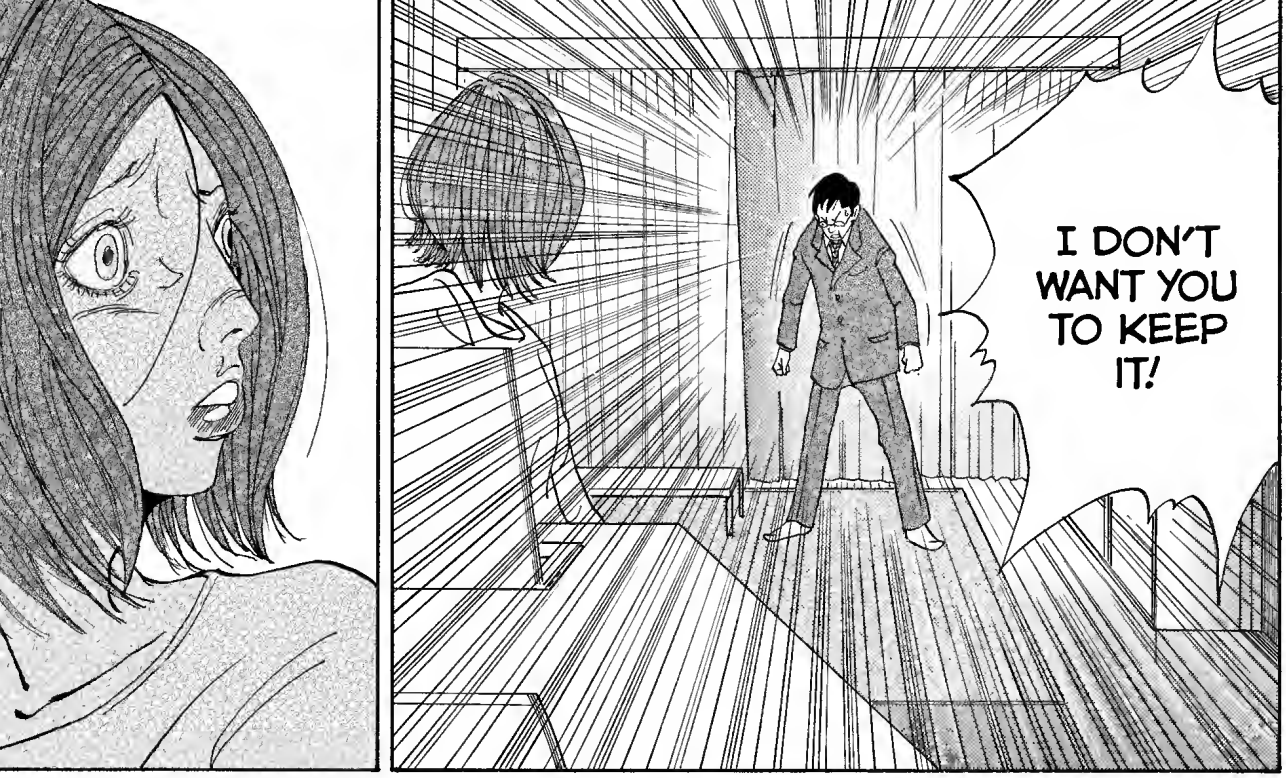
ESPECIALLY IN SITUATIONS LIKE THIS...
...WHEN THE OUTCOME IS SO CRUEL.

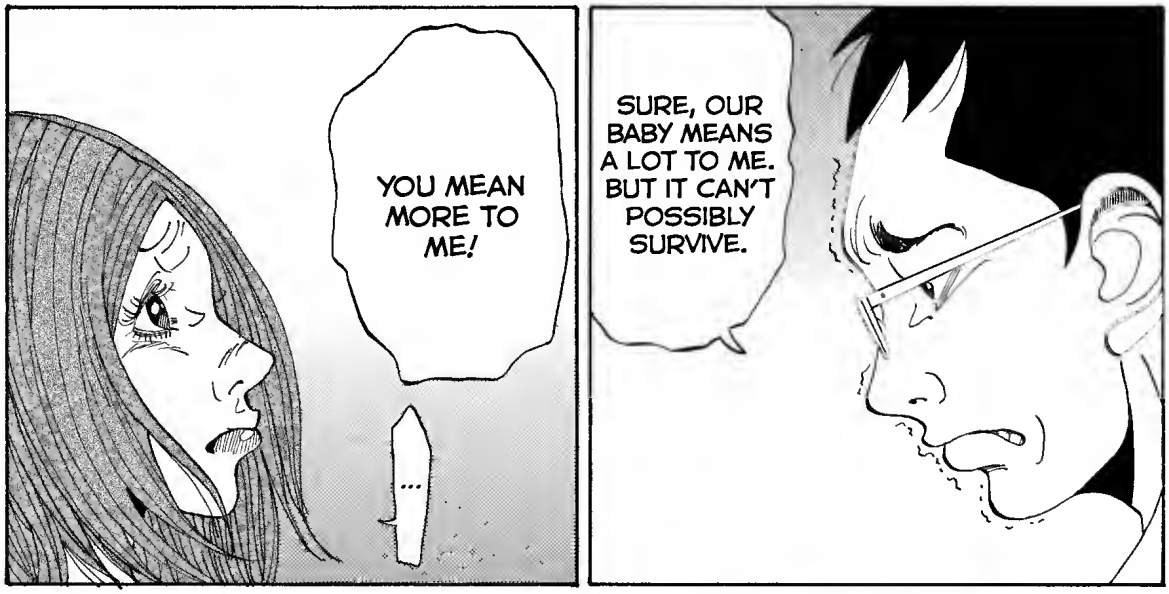
IF THAT'S HOW YOU FEEL...
...THEN DON'T TELL ME.
PLEASE, TELL YOUR WIFE.
I THINK IT'S VERY IMPORTANT THAT SHE HEAR IT.
...

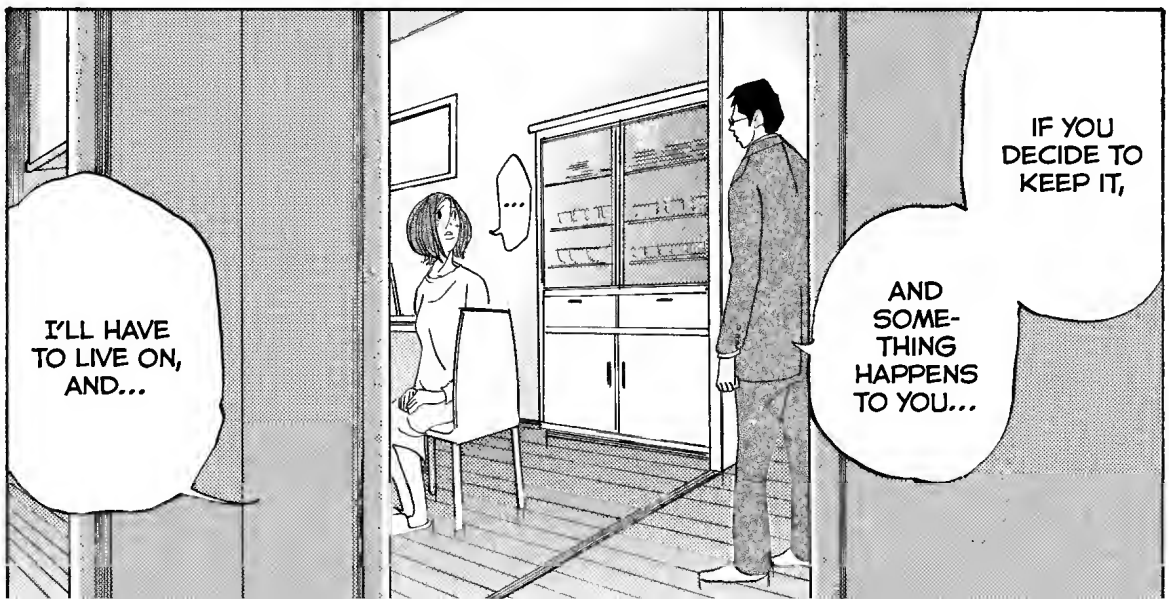
I'M HOME ...
ギュッ
KRRRT

YOU COULD AT LEAST TURN THE LIGHTS ON.
SNAP
HEY...
THERE MIGHT STILL BE A WAY TO SAVE OUR BABY...
THE BABY... LET'S GIVE IT UP.

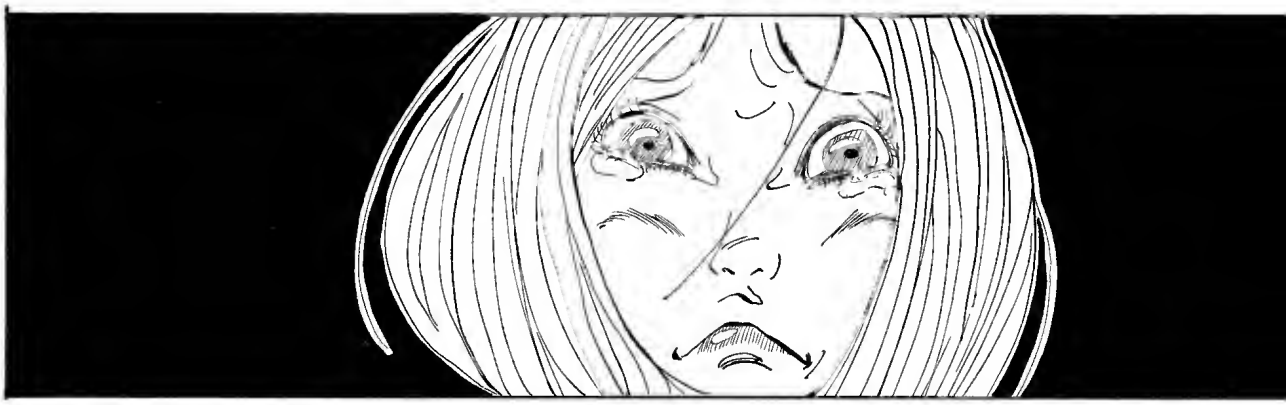
B...BUT OUR BABY'S ALIVE!
...
FIRST THING IN THE MORNING, IT SAYS "GOOD MORNING!"
WHEN I EAT, IT SAYS "YUMMY!"
IT'S ALIVE!
AND WHEN I CRY, IT ASKS, "ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?!"
WE'RE ITS PARENTS! YOU WANT US TO JUST GIVE UP?!
MAYBE, BUT I...


I DON'T WANT YOU TO KEEP IT!


YOU MEAN MORE TO ME!
...
SURE, OUR BABY MEANS A LOT TO ME. BUT IT CAN'T POSSIBLY SURVIVE.


I'LL HAVE TO LIVE ON, AND...
...
IF YOU DECIDE TO KEEP IT,
AND SOME-THING HAPPENS TO YOU...

H...
HATE MY OWN CHILD FOREVER!

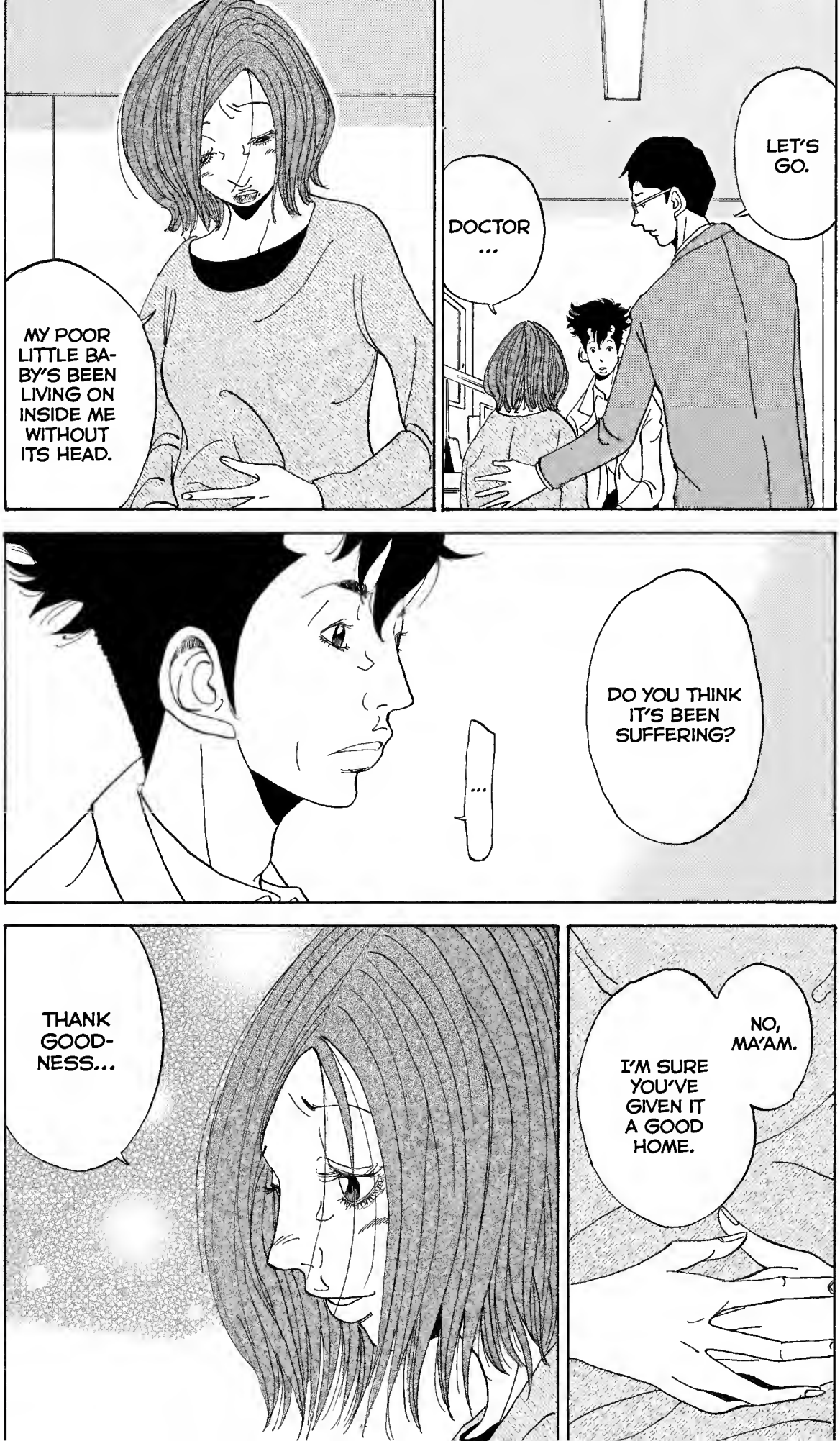


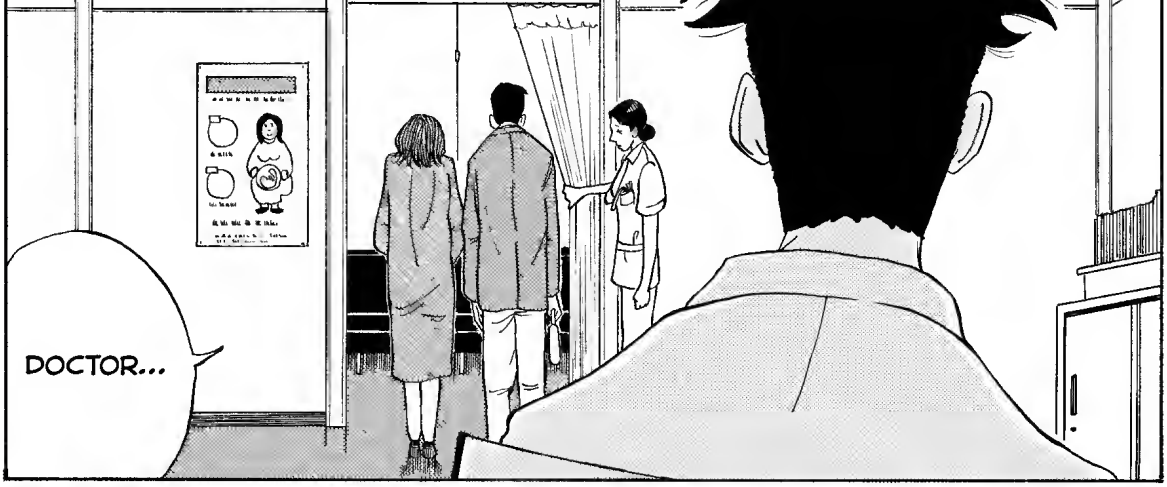
IT CAN'T LIVE ON... SO WE'VE GOT TO LIVE ON FOR IT!

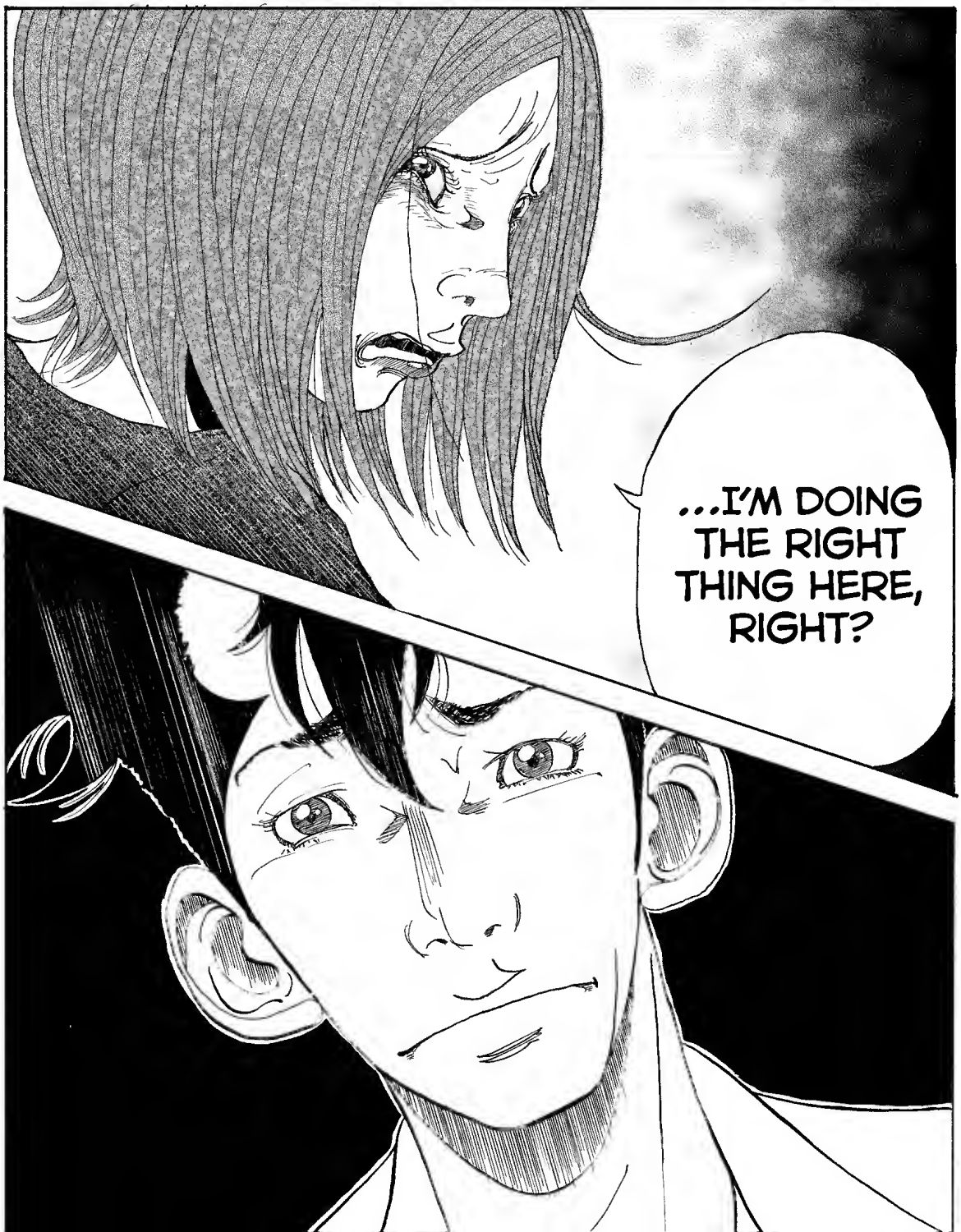
WE'VE GOT TO MAKE SURE WE'RE AROUND TO REMEMBER OUR BABY.
SOB ...

IF WE DON'T, IT'S NEVER GOING TO FORGIVE US!

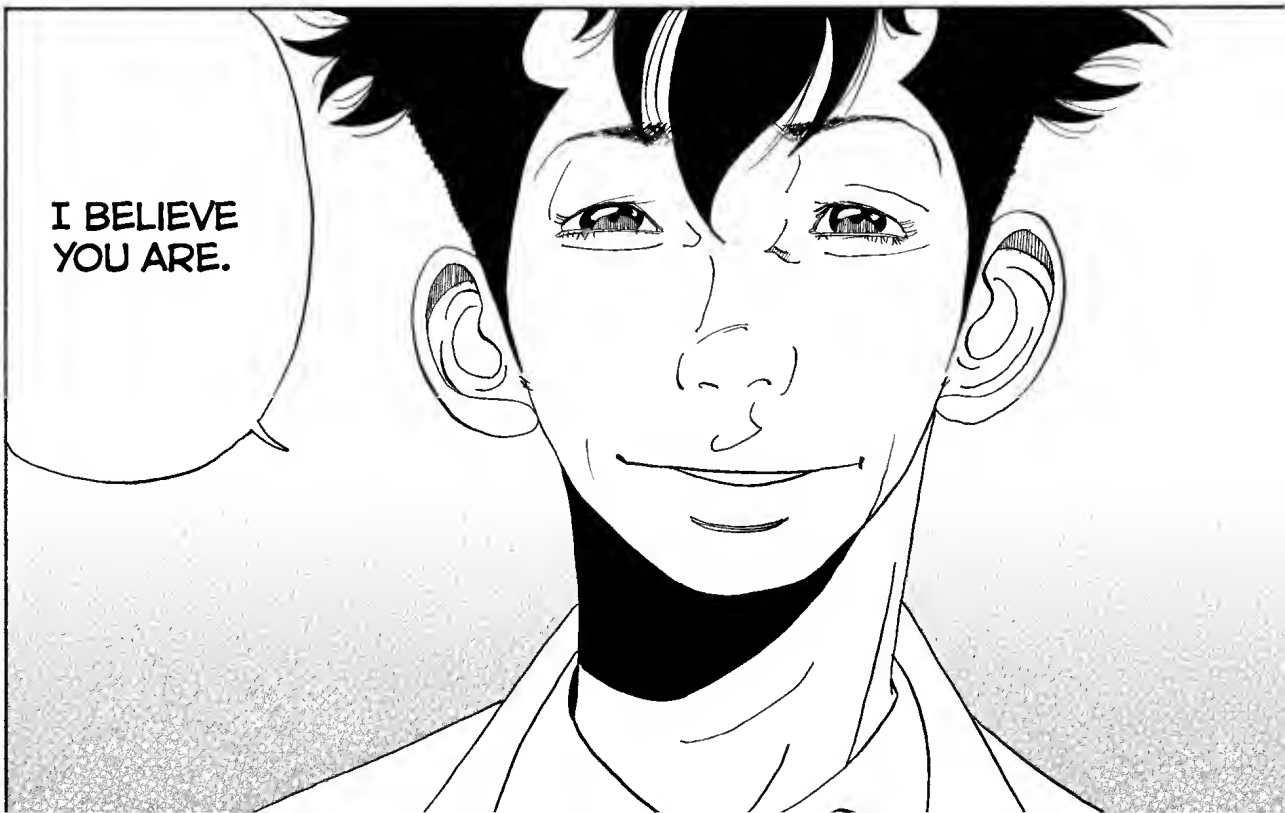
I UNDER-STAND... THANK YOU, DOCTOR.
WE'LL NEED YOU TO FILL OUT SOME PAPER-WORK BEFORE WE CAN MOVE AHEAD WITH THE OPERATION.
H P E


MY POOR LITTLE BA-BY'S BEEN LIVING ON INSIDE ME WITHOUT ITS HEAD.
DOCTOR ...
LET'S GO.
DO YOU THINK IT'S BEEN SUFFERING?
...
THANK GOOD-NESS...
NO, MA'AM.
I'M SURE YOU'VE GIVEN IT A GOOD HOME.


DOCTOR...


...I'M DOING THE RIGHT THING HERE, RIGHT?

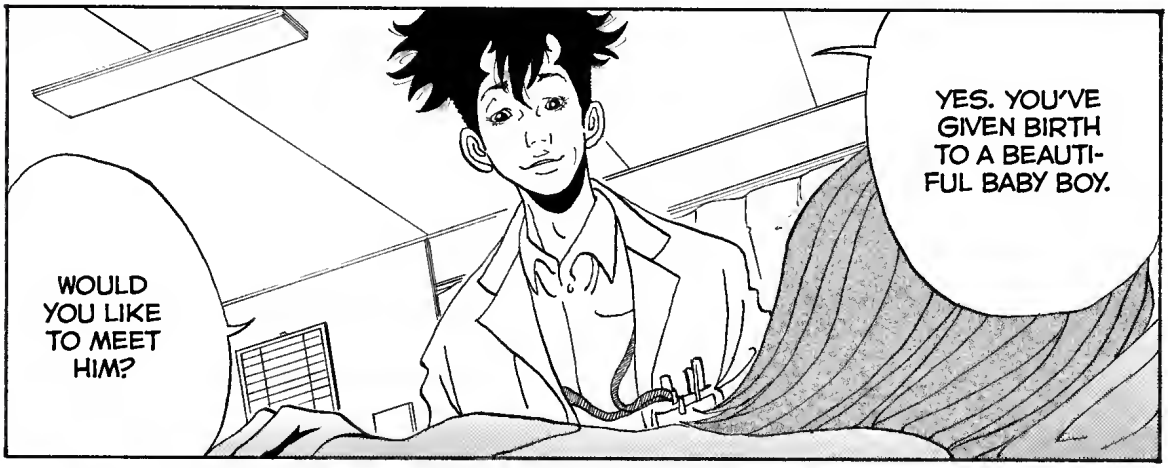
YES.

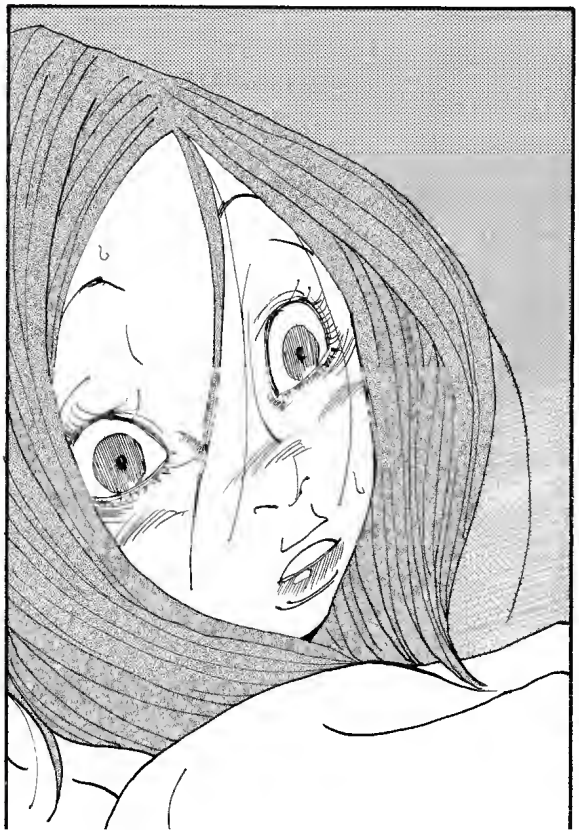

I BELIEVE YOU ARE.

MMGH...
WE DILATED HER CERVIX...
...AND GAVE HER DRUGS TO INDUCE LABOR.
MMGH!
BUT THREE DAYS LATER...
YOU'RE DOING GREAT!
AGH ...!
...
AND SO, WITH NEITHER THE CRIES OF A NEWBORN CHILD NOR WORDS OF CONGRATULA-TION...
AUUGH...

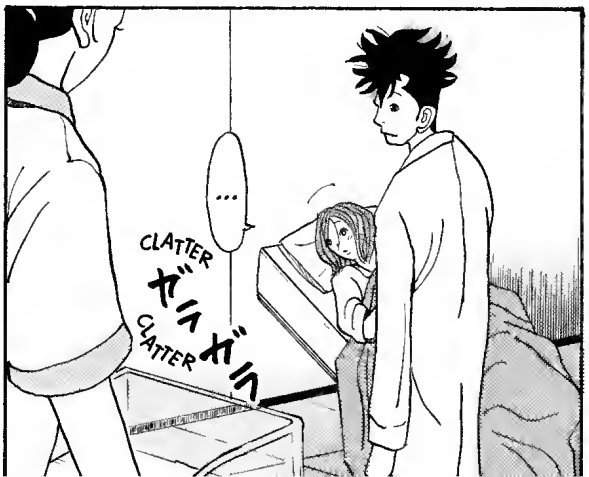
...KAWAMURA-SAN'S PREGNANCY MET A SAD, SILENT END.

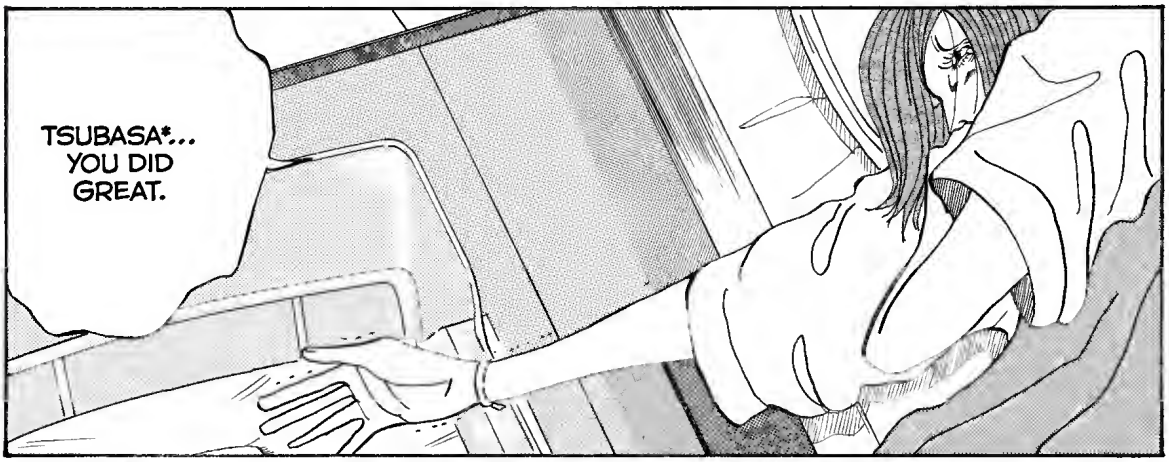
IS IT OVER?


YES. YOU'VE GIVEN BIRTH TO A BEAUTIFUL BABY BOY.
WOULD YOU LIKE TO MEET HIM?

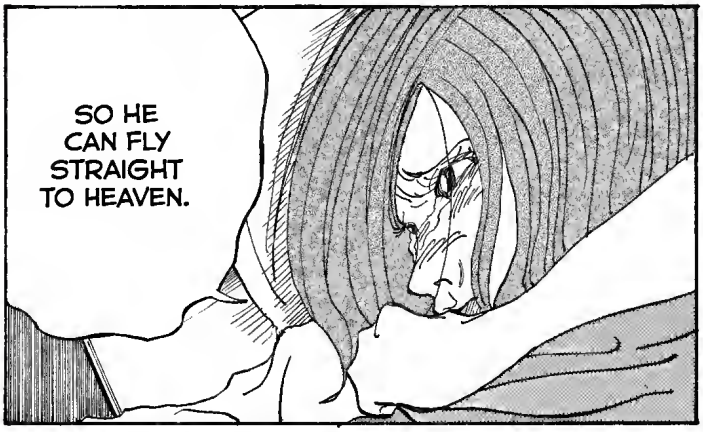


NOD
コクッ
...YES...

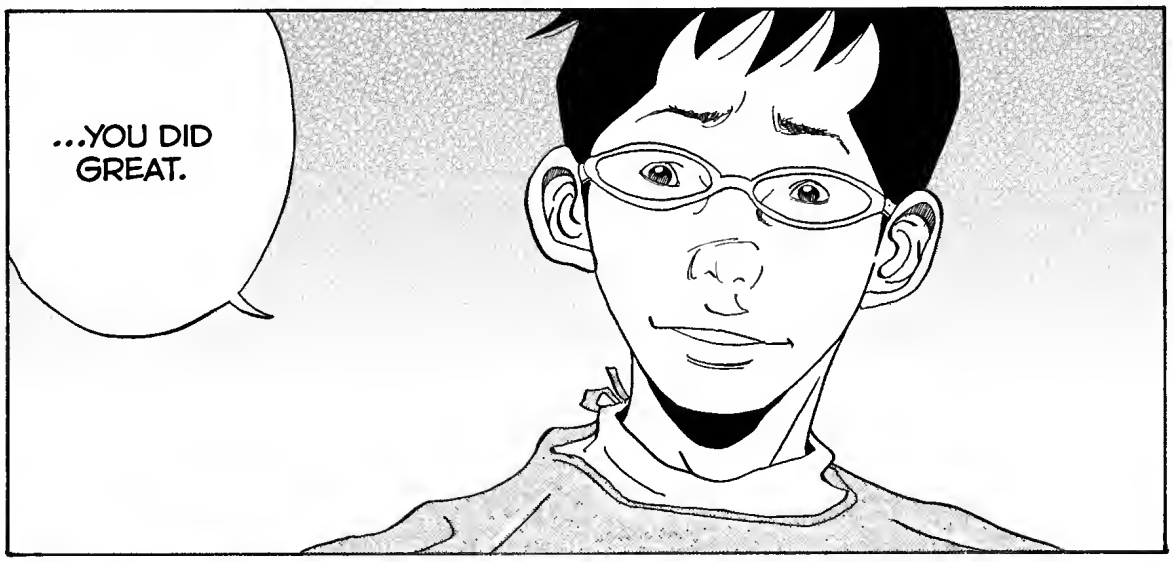

...
CLATTER
ガシャガシャ
CLATTER

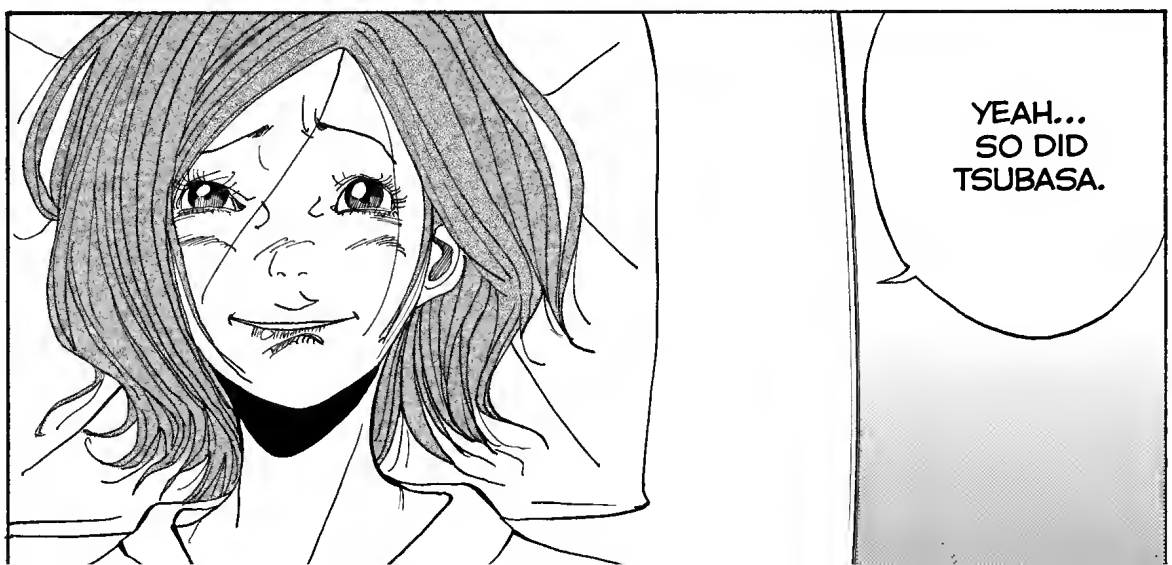


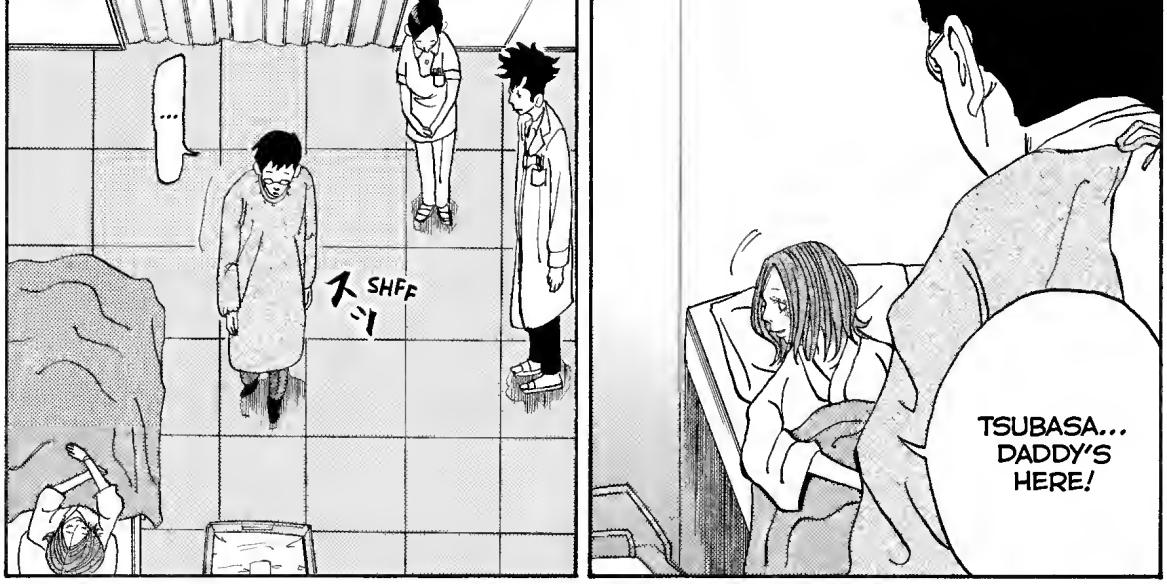
*TSUBASA: "WINGS"

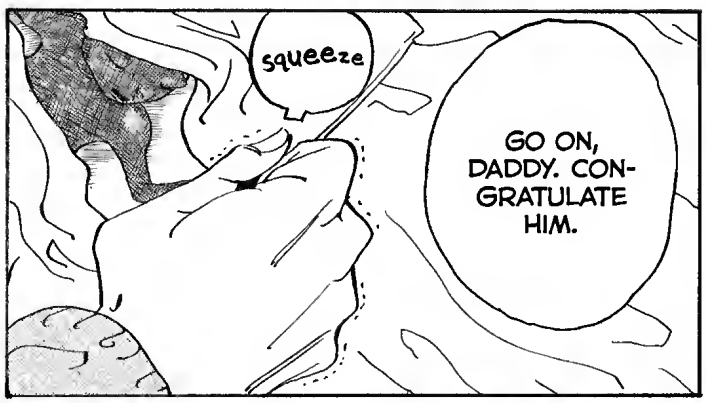


I'VE BROUGHT KAWAMURA-SAN'S HUSBAND.

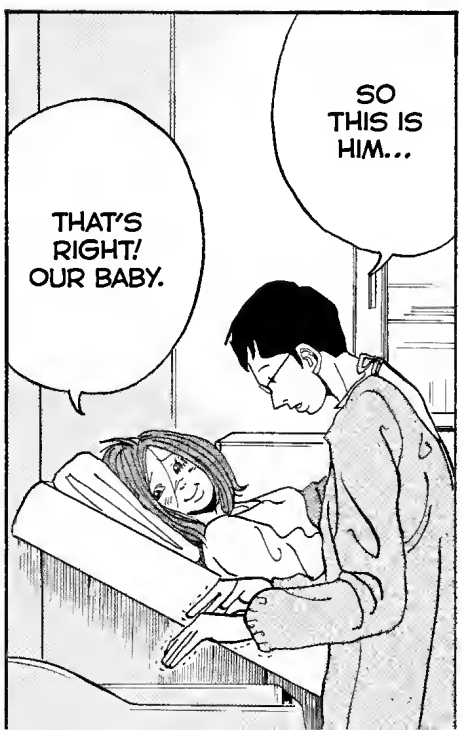

...YOU DID GREAT.


YEAH... SO DID TSUBASA.

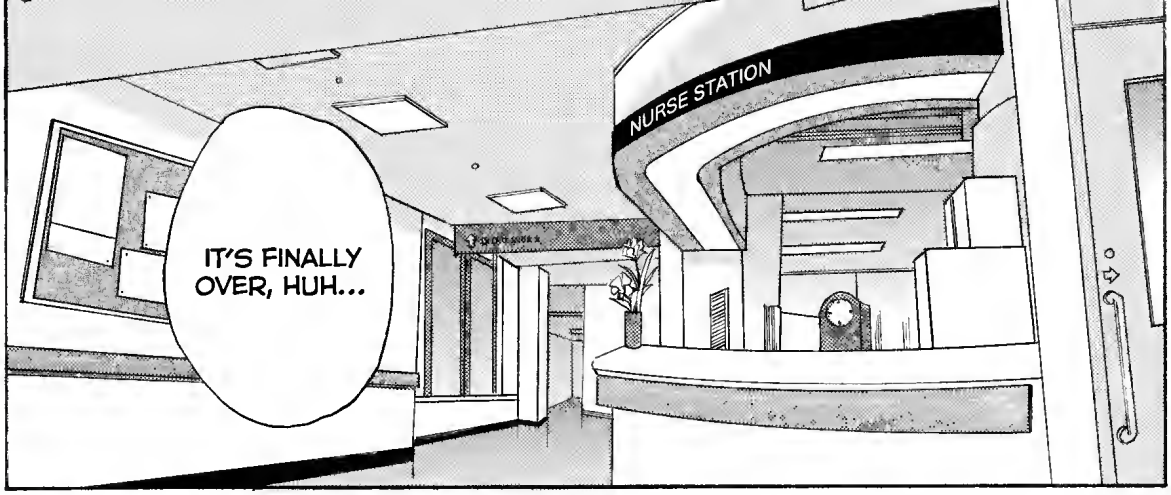

...
SHFF
TSUBASA... DADDY'S HERE!


squeeze
GO ON, DADDY. CON-GRATULATE HIM.

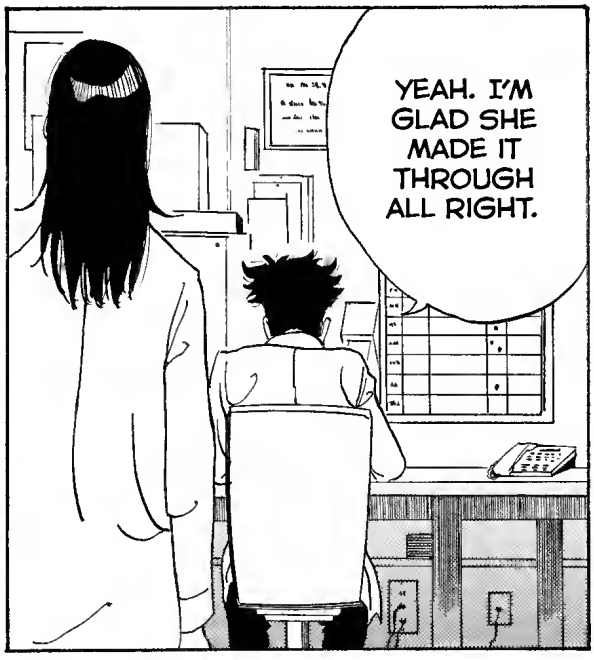
I'M...


SO THIS IS HIM...
THAT'S RIGHT! OUR BABY.

SOB ...
SOB ...
I'M SORRY ...
SNIFF ...
SOB ...
COME ON, DON'T CRY...
Y... SNIFF... YEAH... HIC...
WE TOLD OURSELVES WE'D SMILE FOR THE PHOTO WITH OUR BABY, DIDN'T WE?


NURSE STATION
IT'S FINALLY OVER, HUH...

...
HEY, SHIMOYA.


YEAH. I'M GLAD SHE MADE IT THROUGH ALL RIGHT.

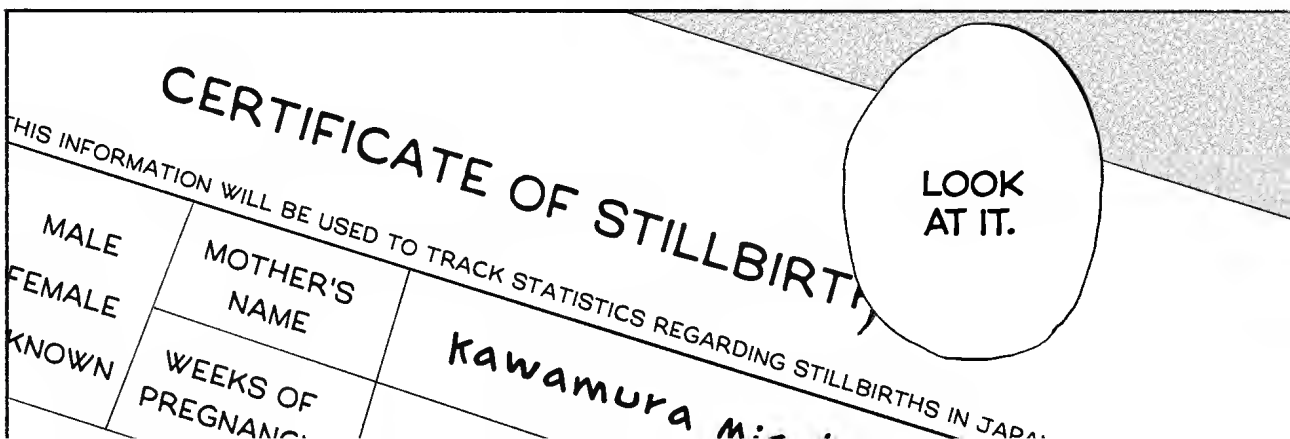
DOCTOR?

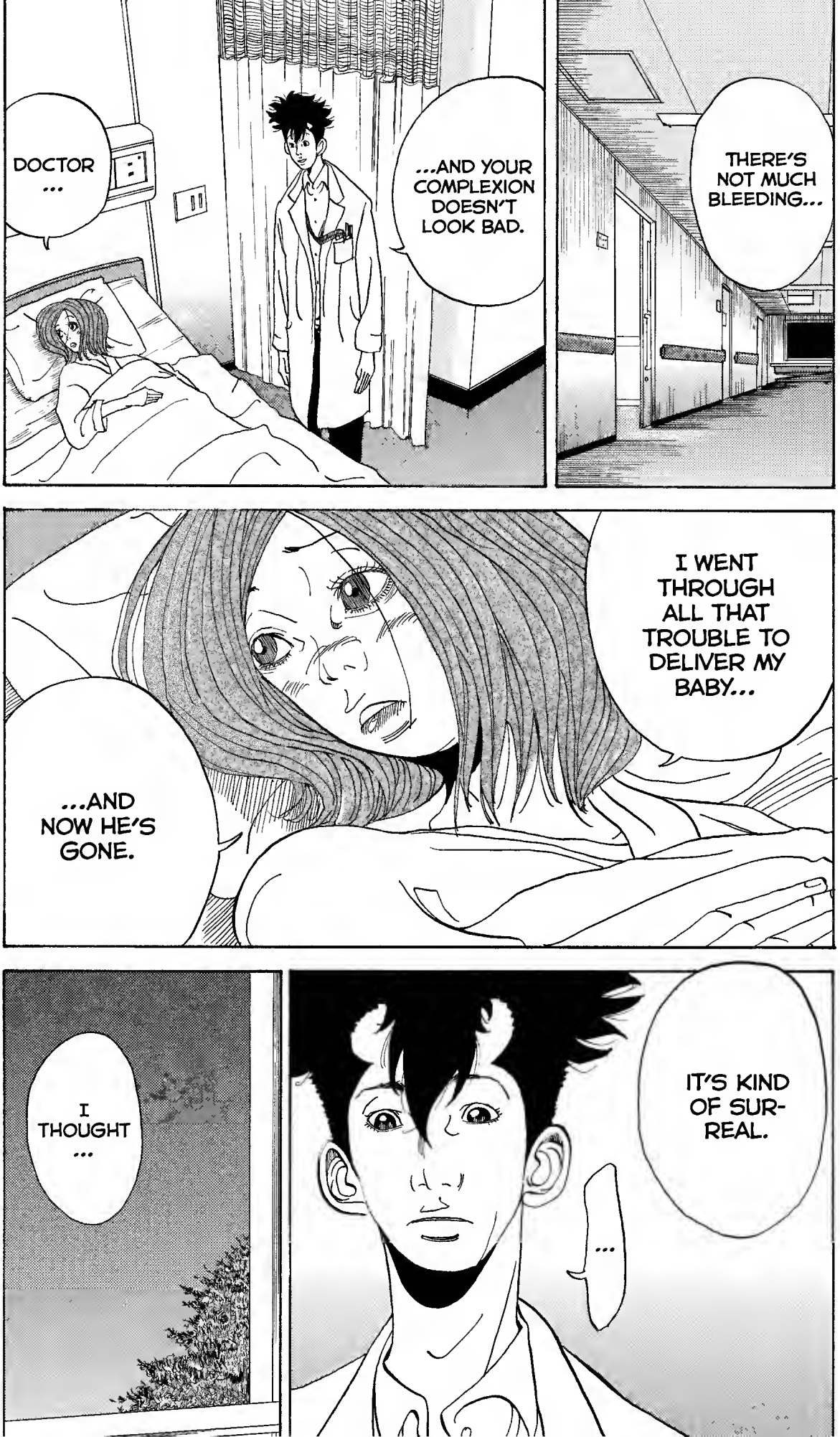
WHY'D YOU GO INTO GYNE-COLOGY?

*SEE TRANSLATION NOTES, PAGE 219.

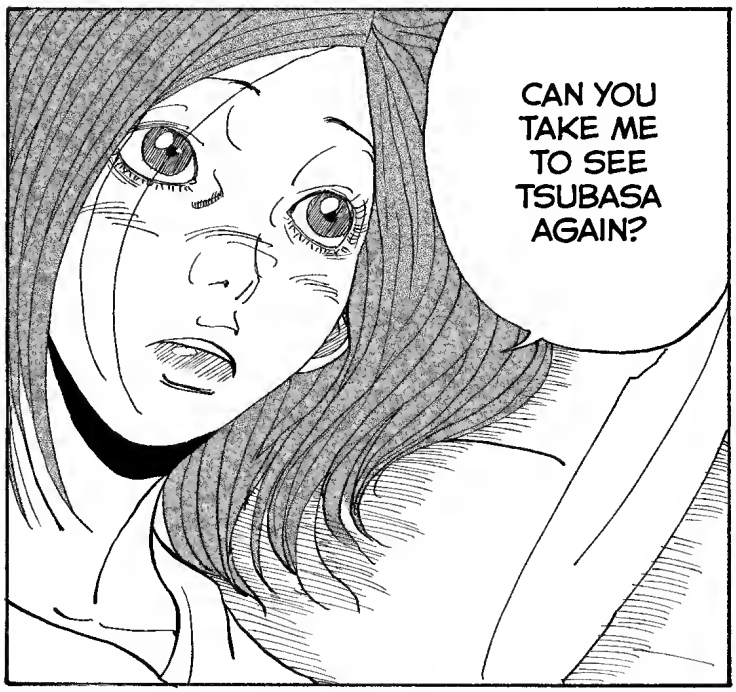
MY NAME MEANS "STORK," SO, YOU KNOW...

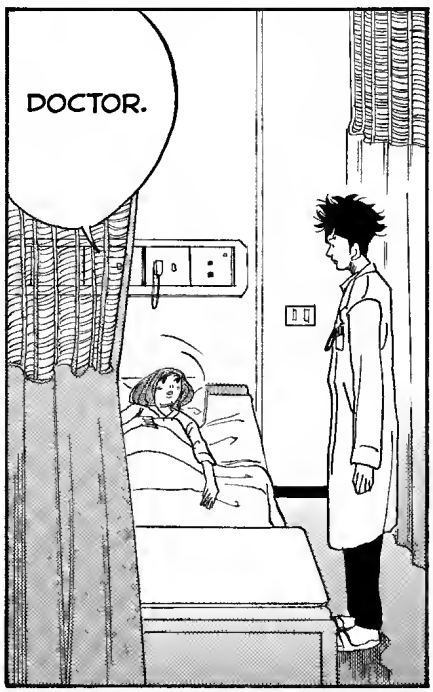
...I DON'T WANT TO WRITE THIS.

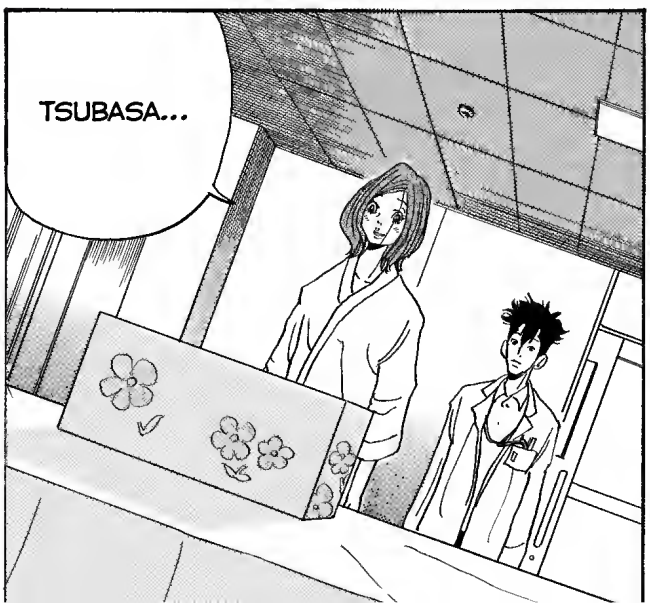

CERTIFICATE OF STILLBIRTH
THIS INFORMATION WILL BE USED TO TRACK STATISTICS REGARDING STILLBIRTHS IN JAPA
MALE
FEMALE
KNOWN
MOTHER'S NAME
WEEKS OF PREGNANC
Kawamura Mi
LOOK AT IT.

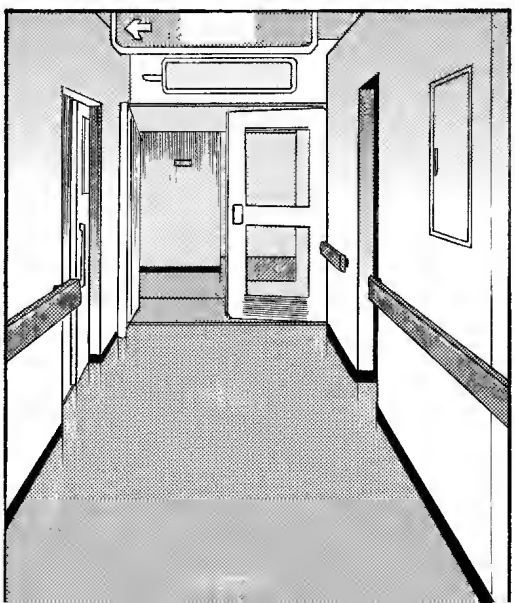

DOCTOR ...
...AND YOUR COMPLEXION DOESN'T LOOK BAD.
THERE'S NOT MUCH BLEEDING...
I WENT THROUGH ALL THAT TROUBLE TO DELIVER MY BABY...
...AND NOW HE'S GONE.
I THOUGHT ...
...
IT'S KIND OF SUR-REAL.

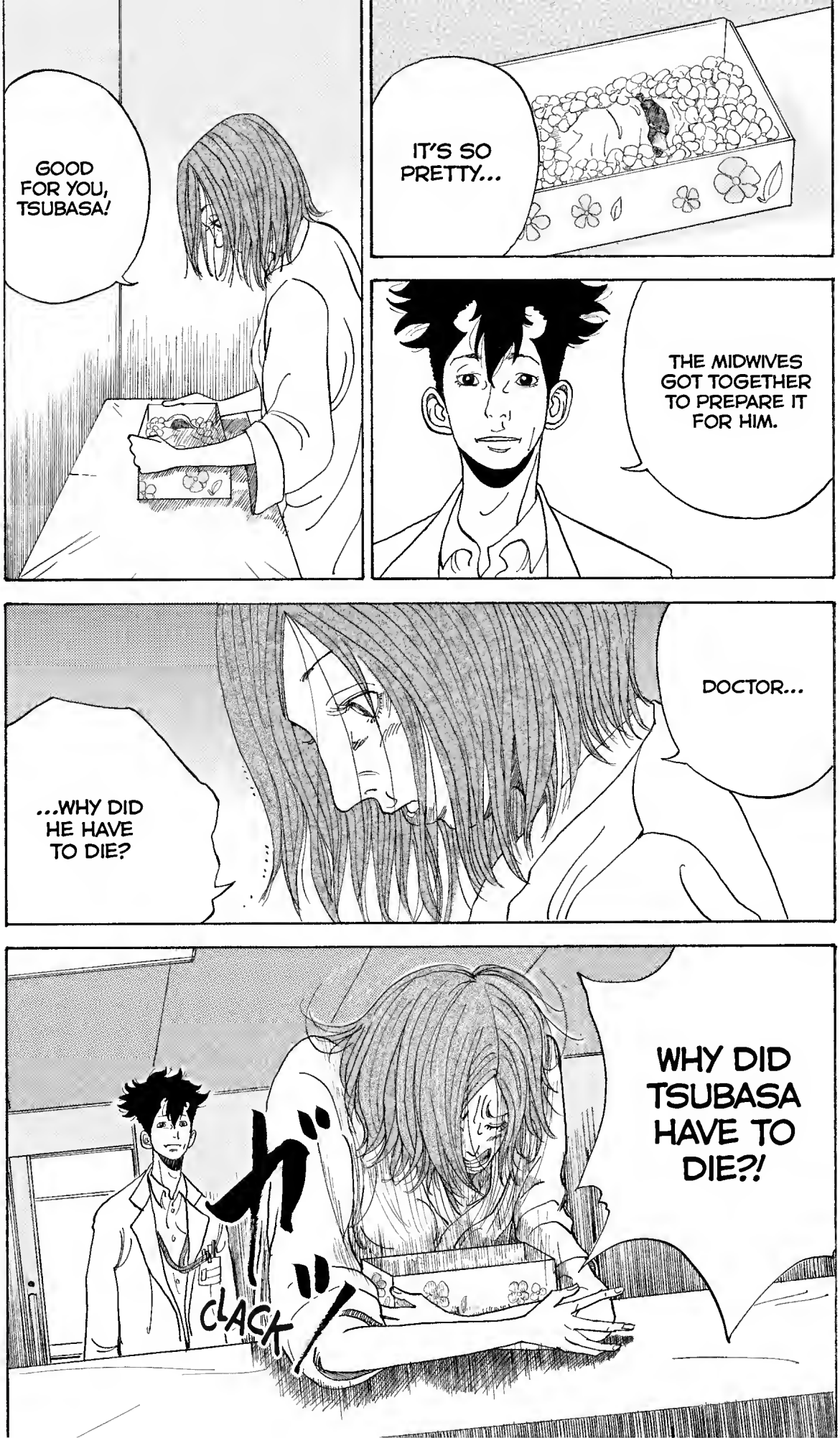
...CHILDBIRTH WAS SUPPOSED TO BE A LITTLE HAPPIER.


CAN YOU TAKE ME TO SEE TSUBASA AGAIN?

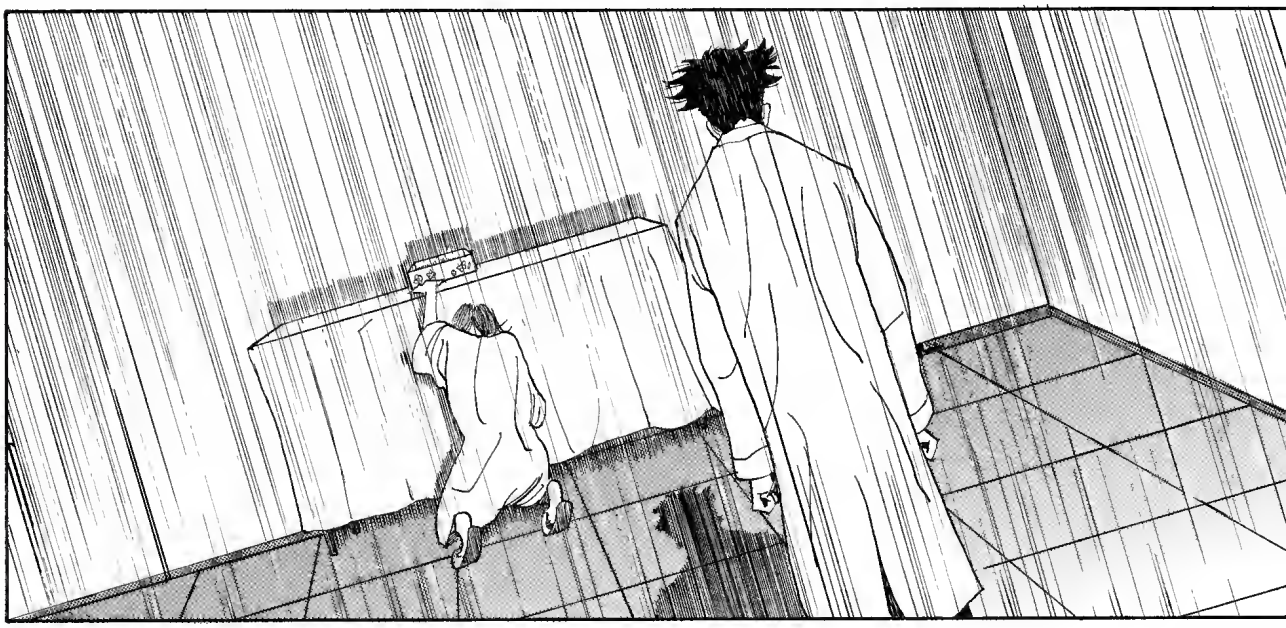

DOCTOR.

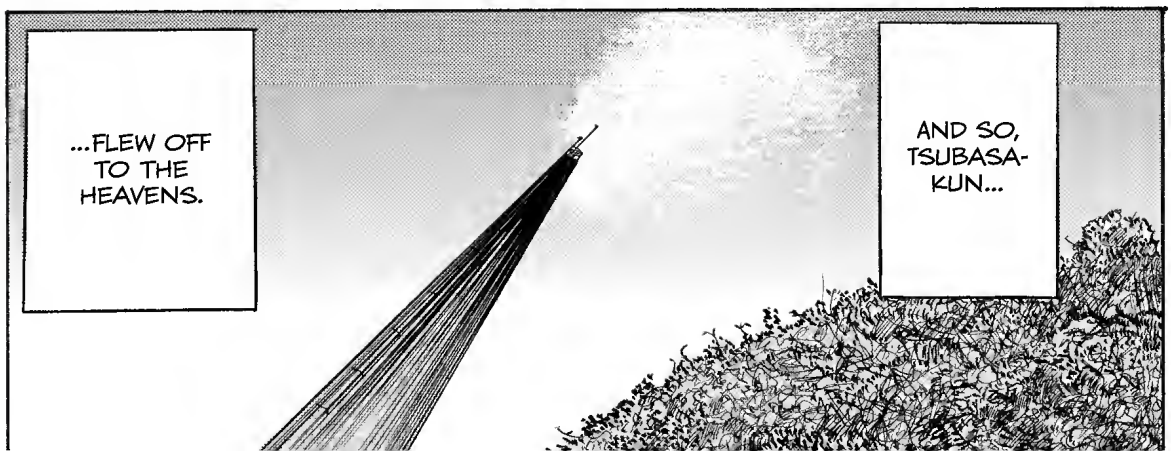

TSUBASA...



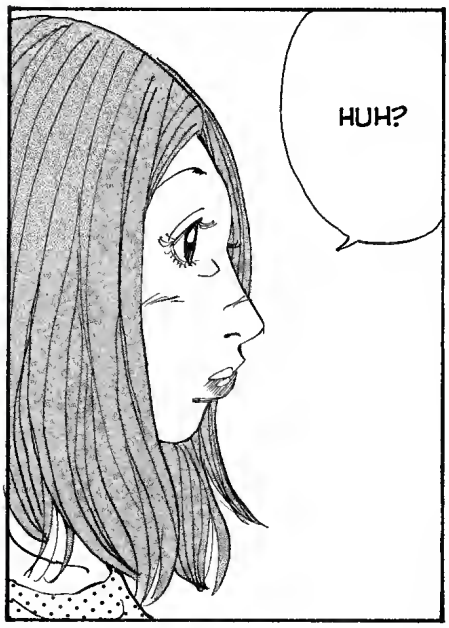

GOOD FOR YOU, TSUBASA!
IT'S SO PRETTY...
THE MIDWIVES GOT TOGETHER TO PREPARE IT FOR HIM.
DOCTOR...
...WHY DID HE HAVE TO DIE?
WHY DID TSUBASA HAVE TO DIE?!
CLACK

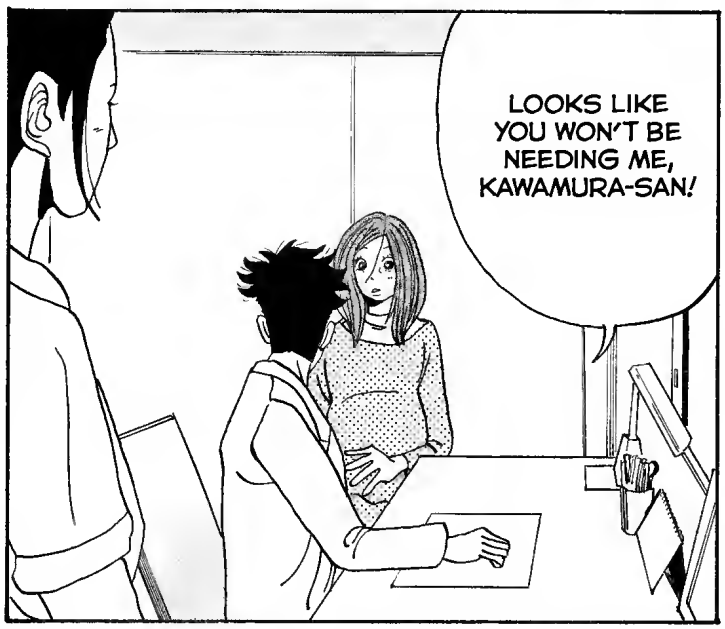
AS...
AS LONG AS I LIVE, I'LL NEVER...

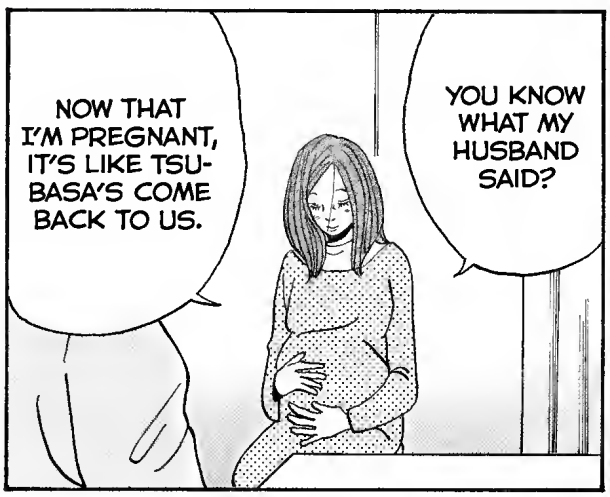


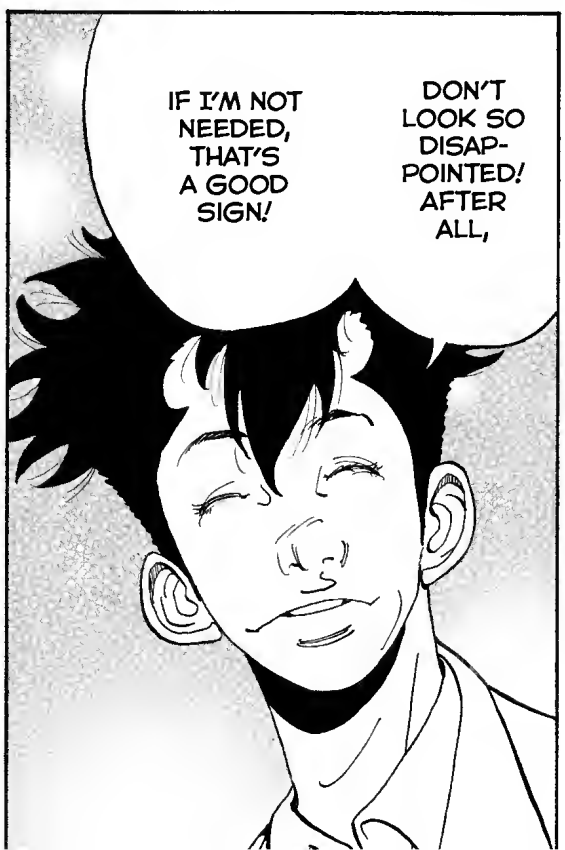

...FLEW OFF TO THE HEAVENS.
AND SO, TSUBASA-KUN...

ABOUT A YEAR LATER, THE KAWAMURAS WERE PREGNANT AGAIN.
EVERY-THING LOOKS NORMAL.
ERSONA
DEPARTMENTS
PEDIATRICS

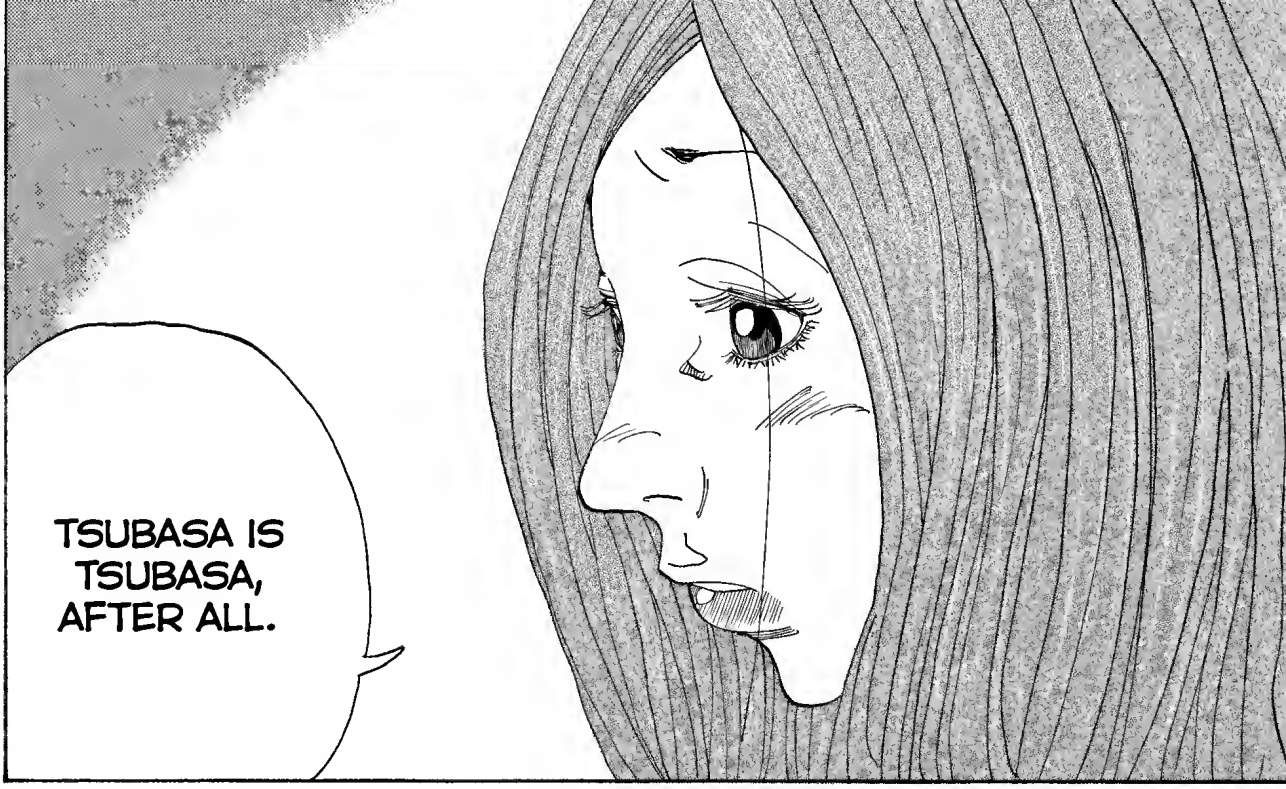

HUH?

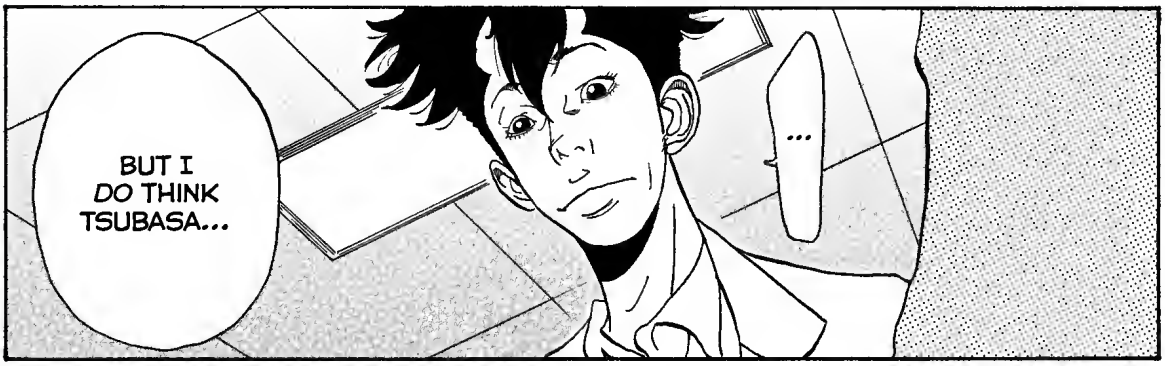

LOOKS LIKE YOU WON'T BE NEEDING ME, KAWAMURA-SAN!

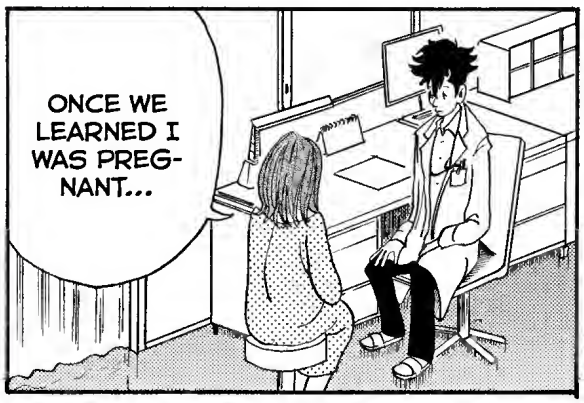

NOW THAT I'M PREGNANT, IT'S LIKE TSU-BASA'S COME BACK TO US.
YOU KNOW WHAT MY HUSBAND SAID?

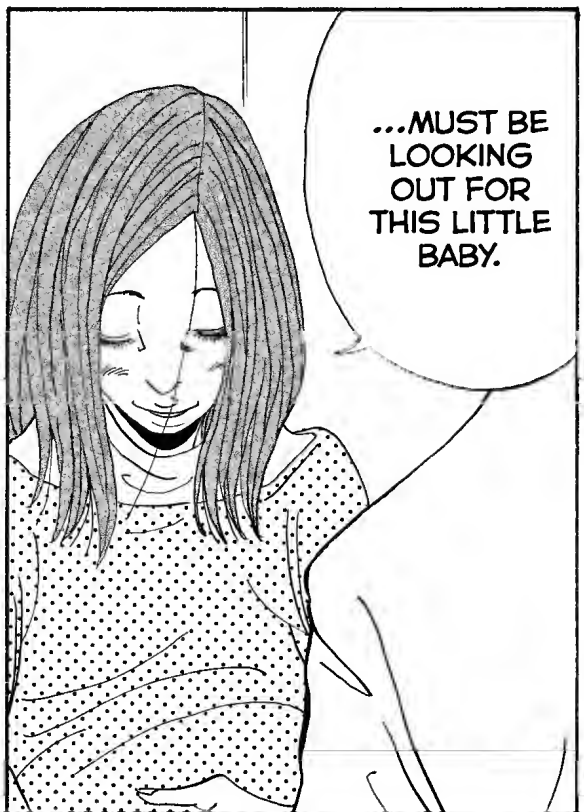

DON'T LOOK SO DISAP-POINTED! AFTER ALL,
IF I'M NOT NEEDED, THAT'S A GOOD SIGN!

BUT I DON'T THINK SO.

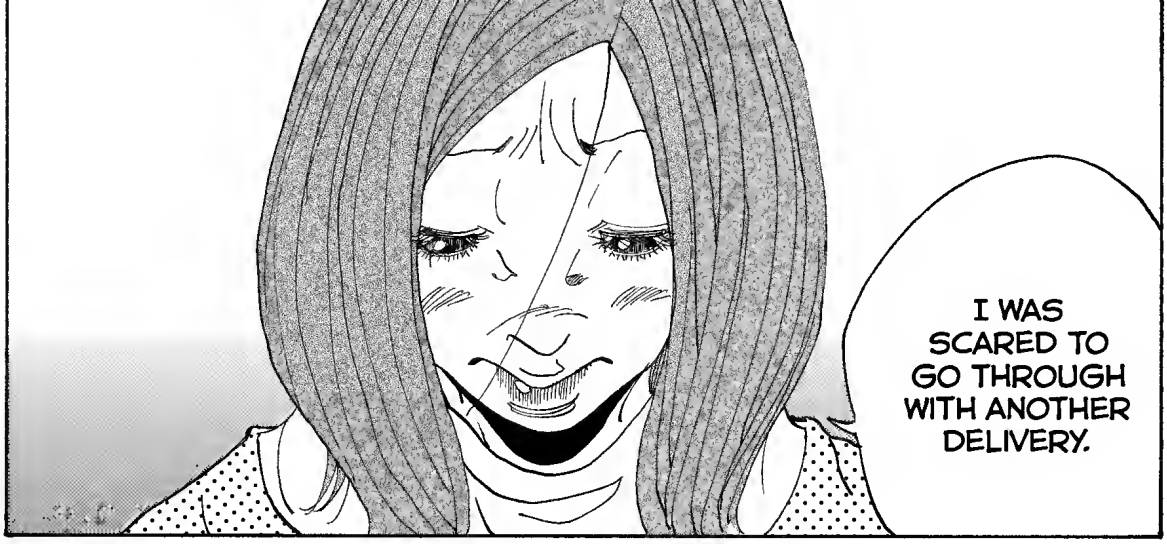

TSUBASA IS TSUBASA, AFTER ALL.

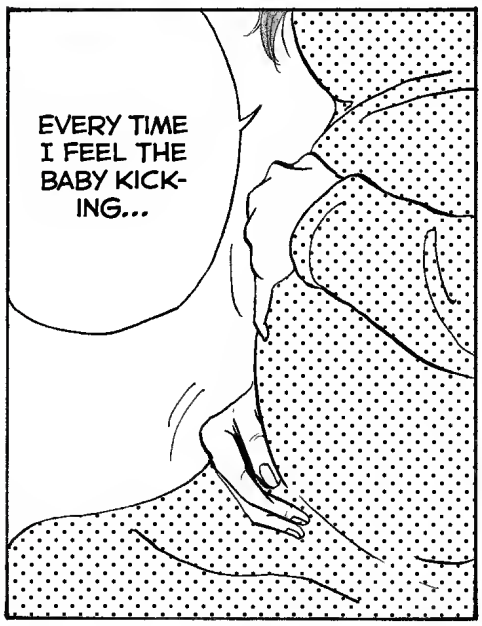

BUT I *DO* THINK TSUBASA...
...

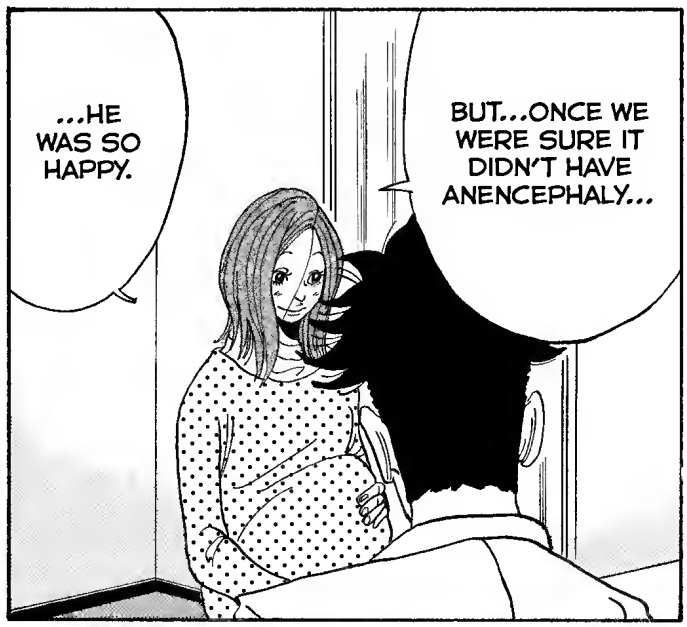

ONCE WE LEARNED I WAS PREG-NANT...

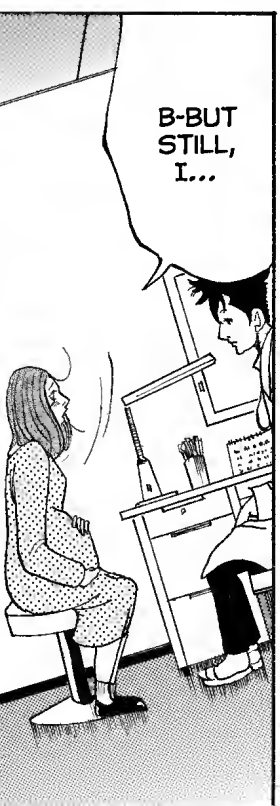

...MUST BE LOOKING OUT FOR THIS LITTLE BABY.

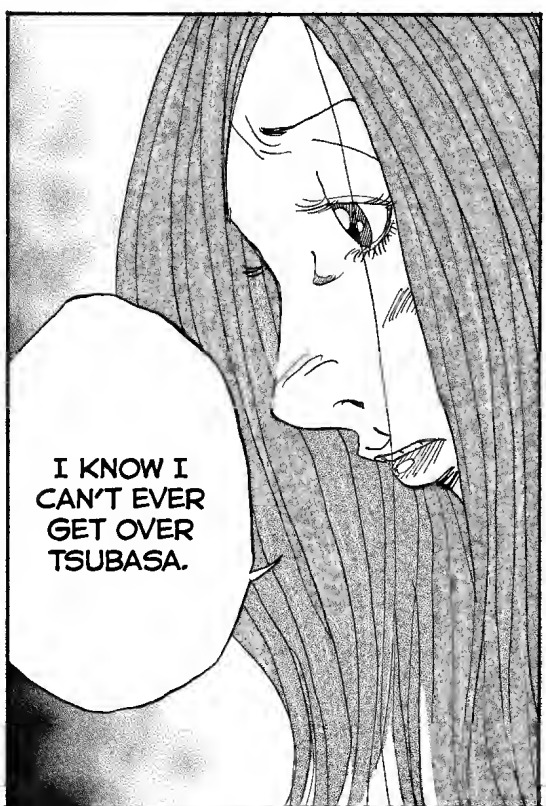
...JUST BETWEEN YOU AND ME, I THOUGHT ABOUT GETTING AN ABORTION AND KEEPING IT FROM MY HUSBAND.


I WAS SCARED TO GO THROUGH WITH ANOTHER DELIVERY.

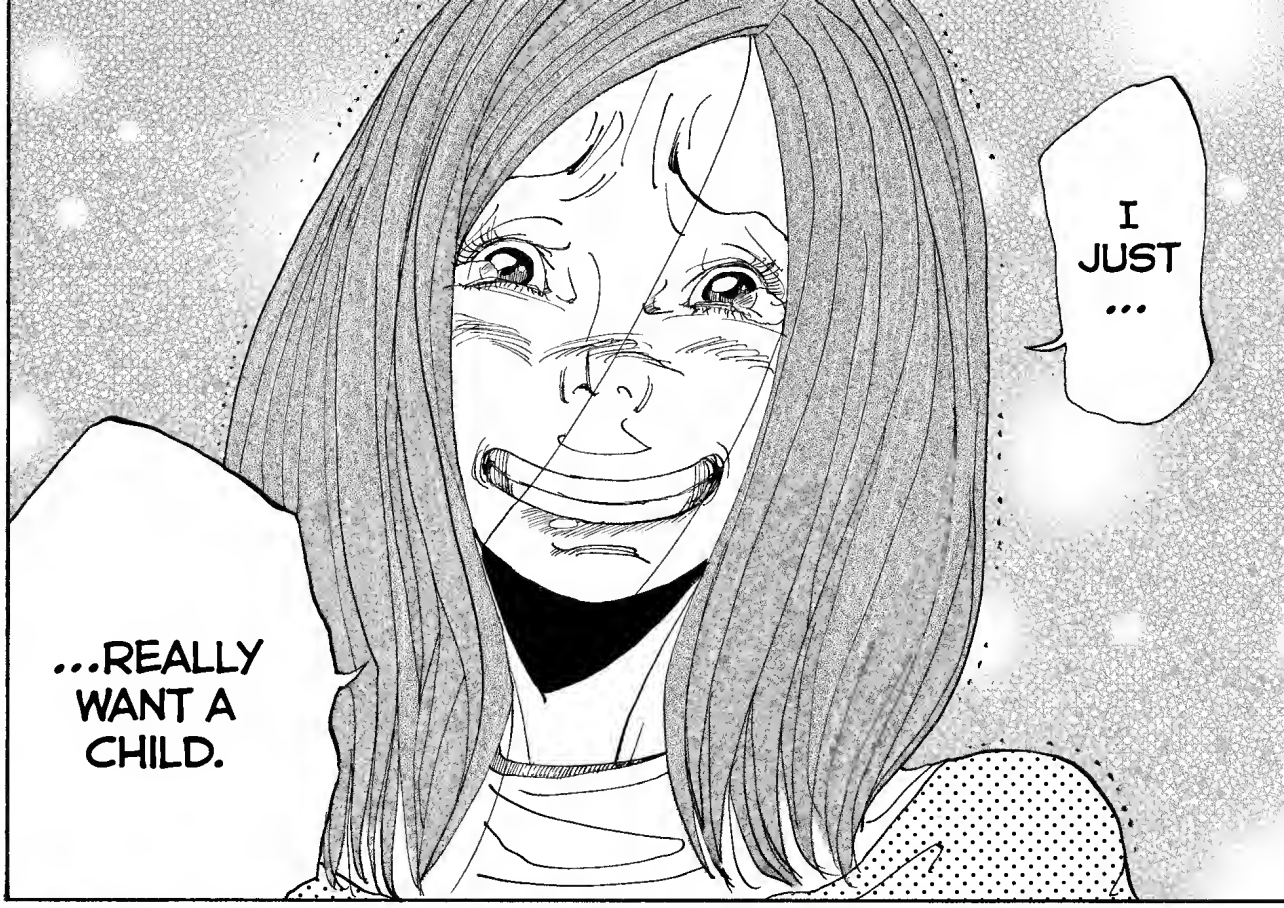

EVERY TIME I FEEL THE BABY KICK-ING...

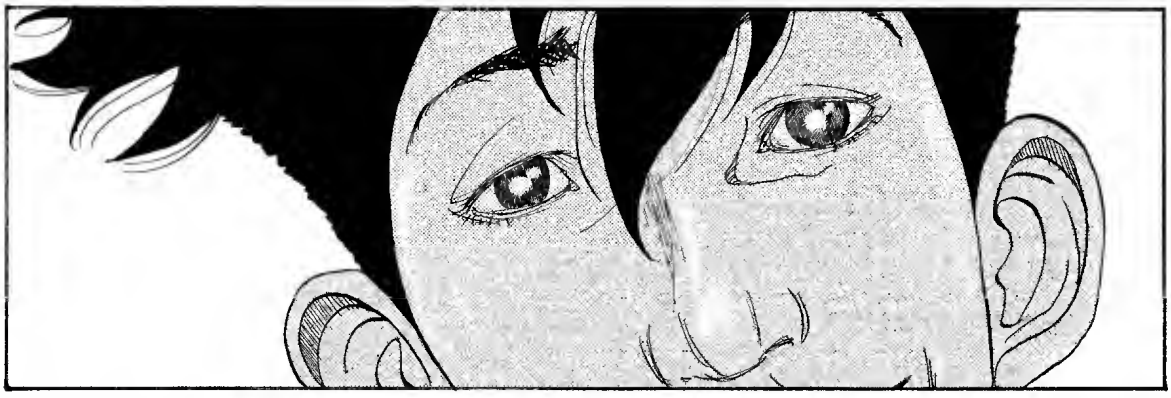

...HE WAS SO HAPPY.
BUT...ONCE WE WERE SURE IT DIDN'T HAVE ANENCEPHALY...

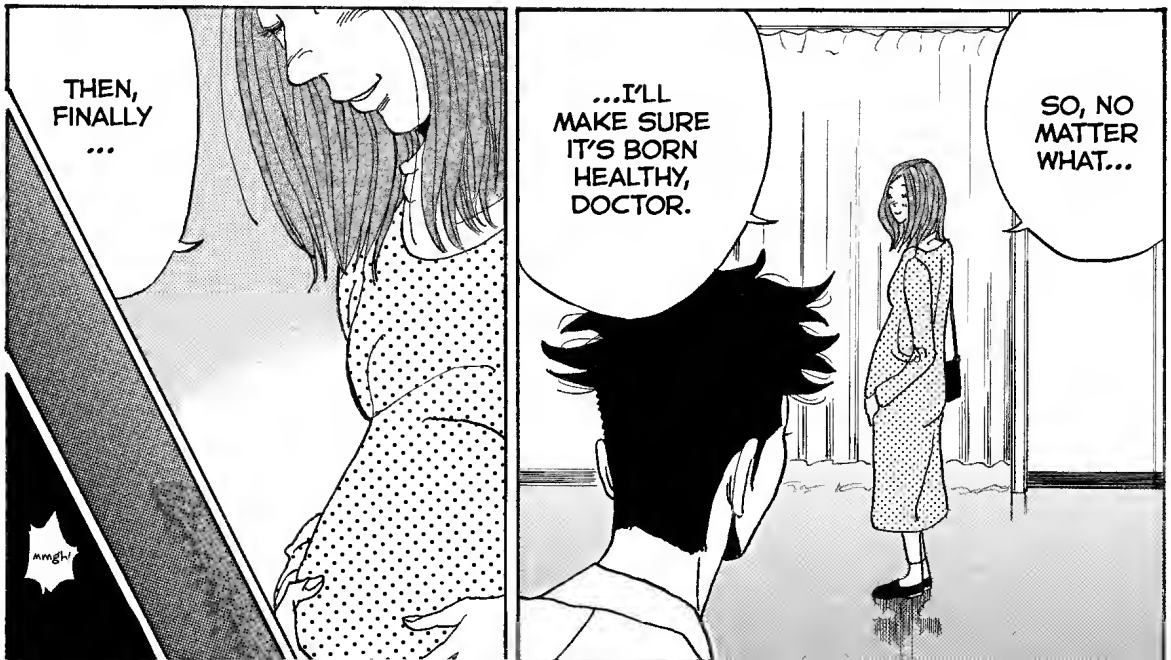

B-BUT STILL, I...


I KNOW I CAN'T EVER GET OVER TSUBASA.

...IT HURTS.
...

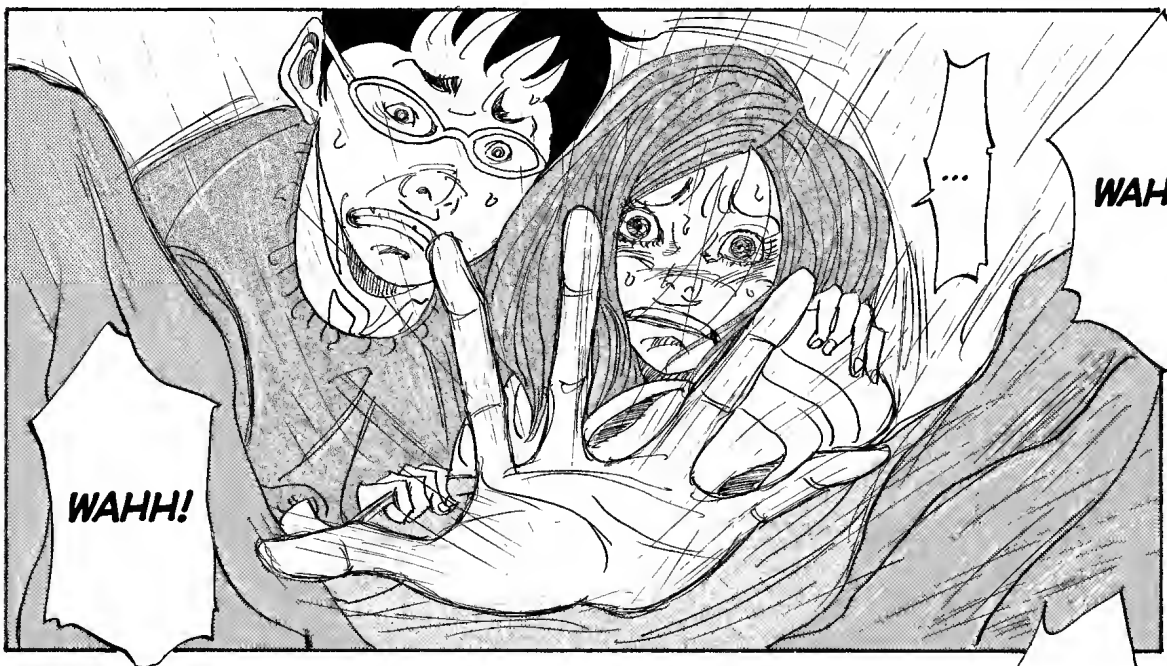

I JUST ...
...REALLY WANT A CHILD.

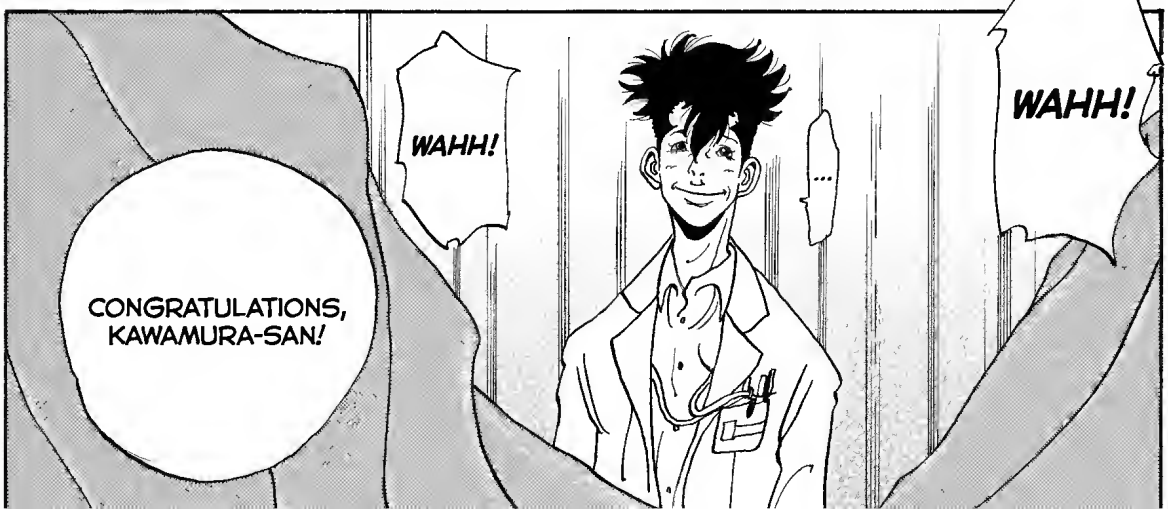


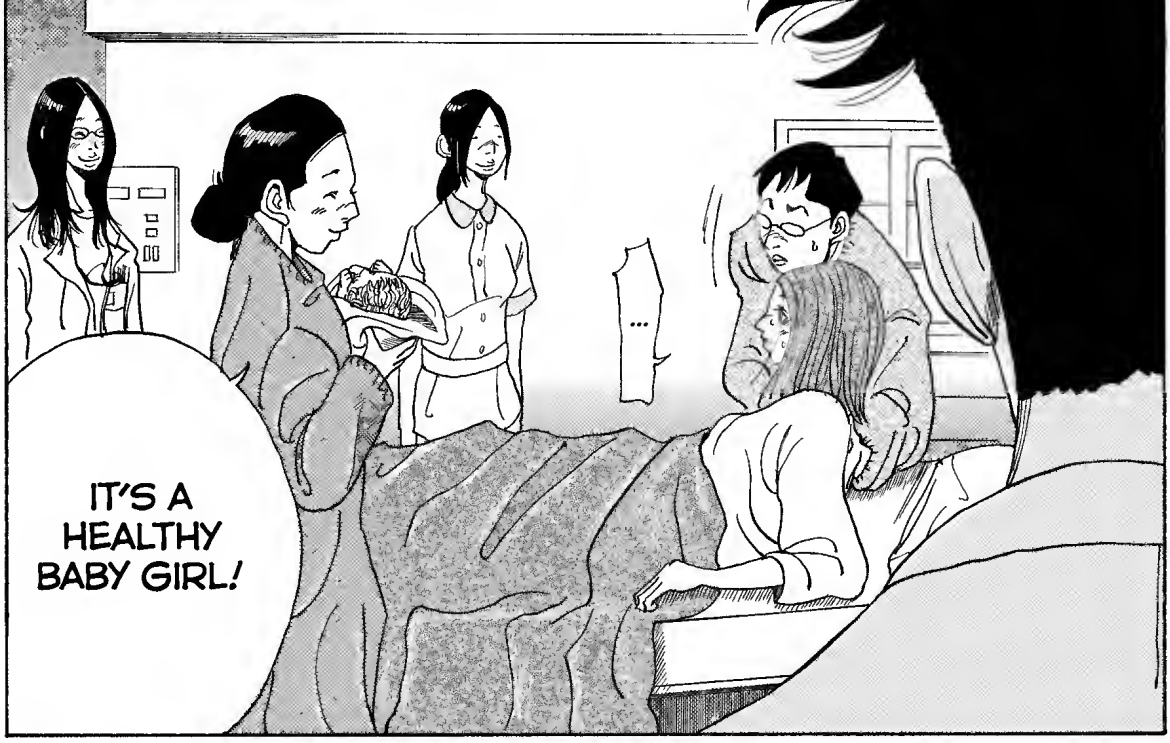

THEN, FINALLY ...
mmgh!
...I'LL MAKE SURE IT'S BORN HEALTHY, DOCTOR.
SO, NO MATTER WHAT...

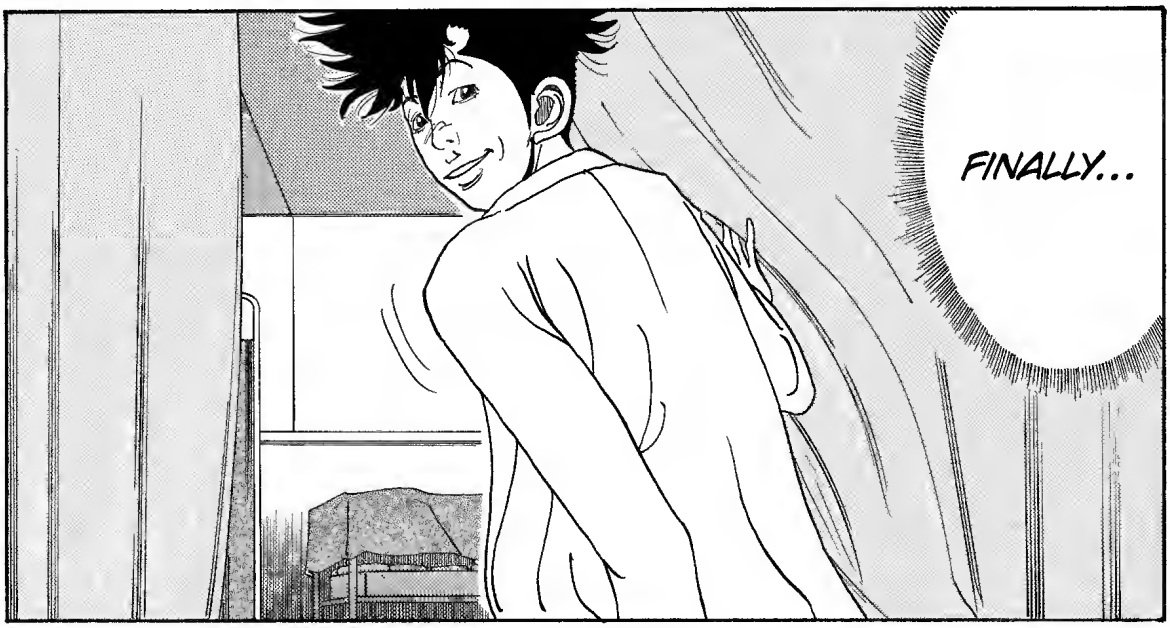
FINALLY, I KNOW...
AGH
POP
FWSHH
W...

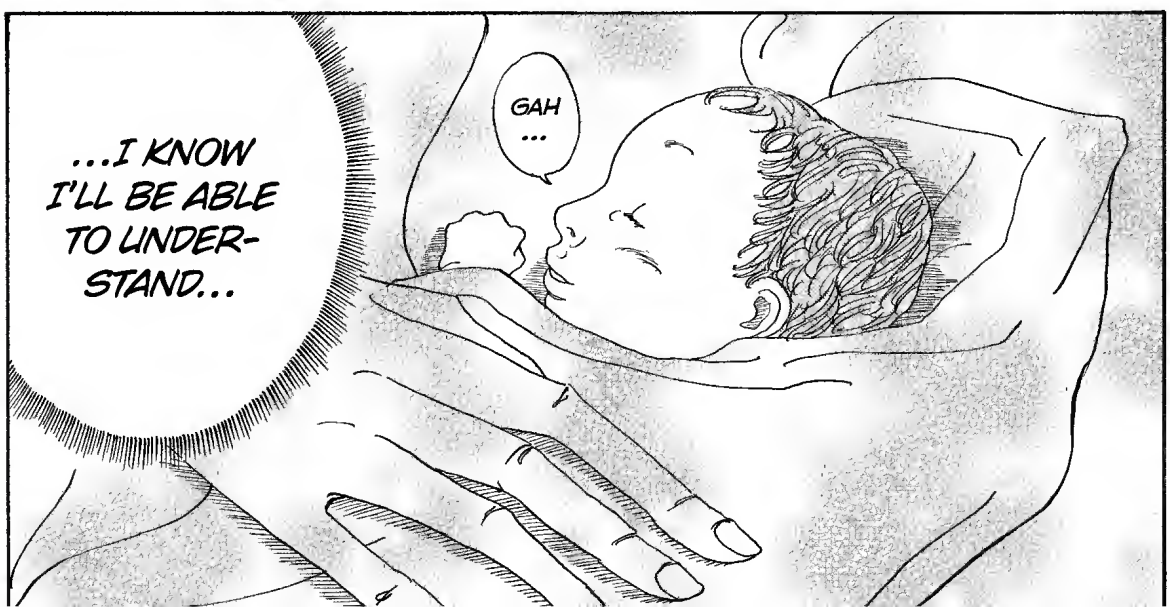
Wahh!


...
WAHH!
WAHH!


WAHH!
...
WAHH!
CONGRATULATIONS, KAWAMURA-SAN!

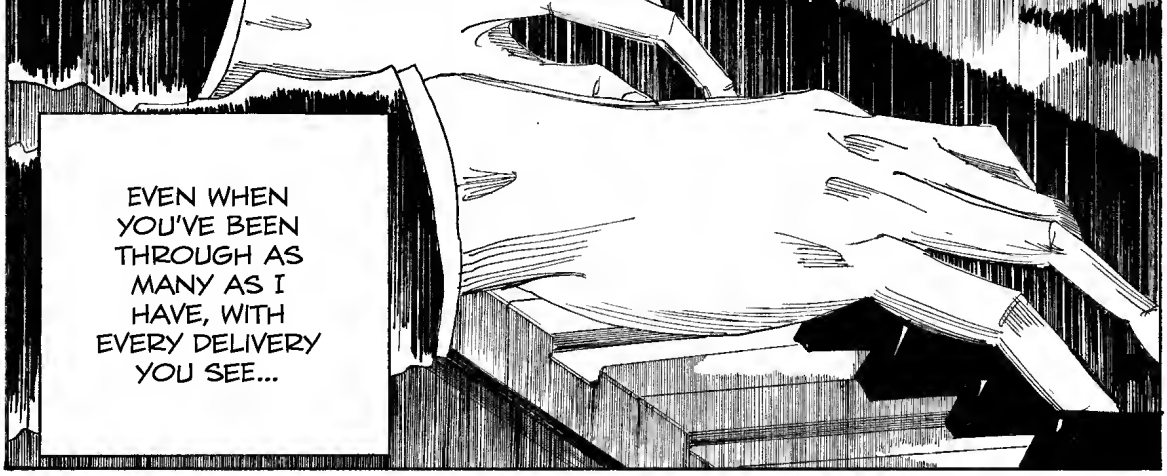

IT'S A HEALTHY BABY GIRL!
...!

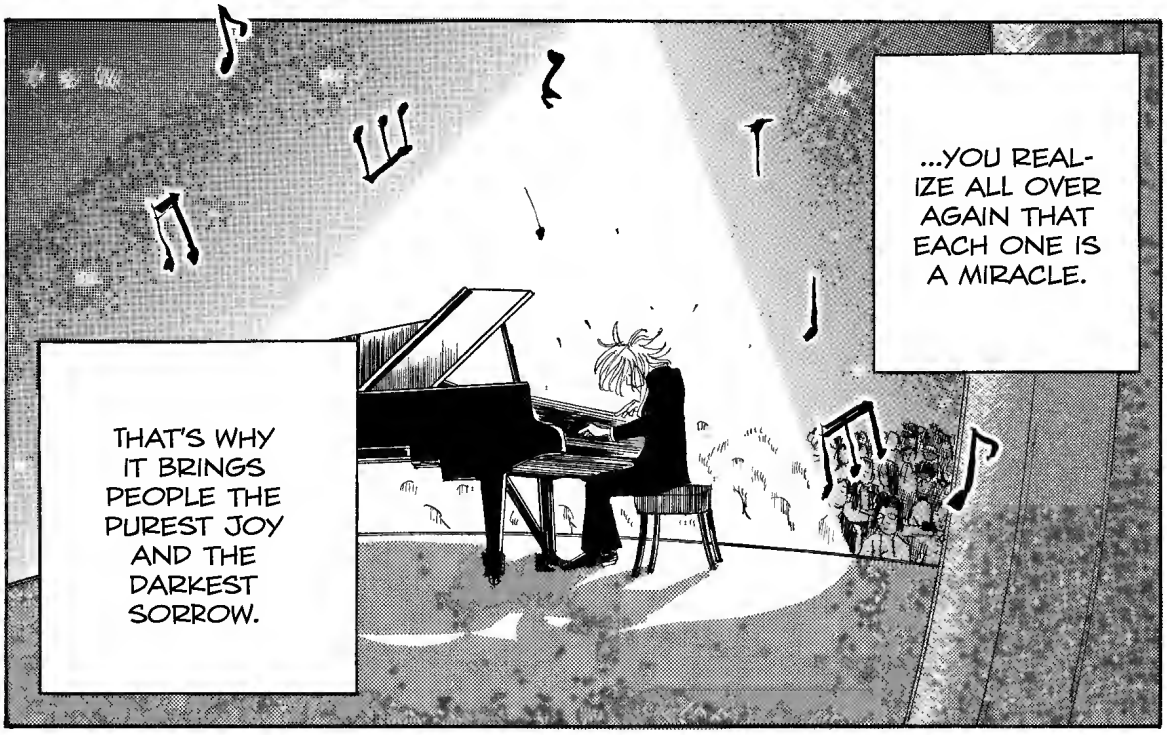

FINALLY...


...I KNOW I'LL BE ABLE TO UNDER-STAND...
GAH ...

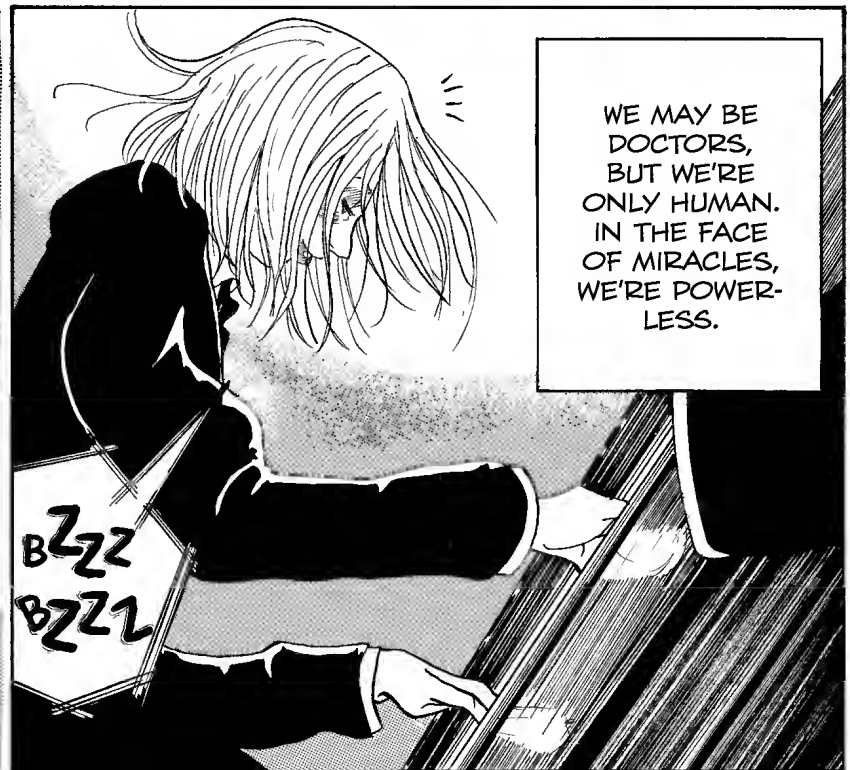
...HOW GLAD I AM THAT TSUBASA CAME INTO MY LIFE.

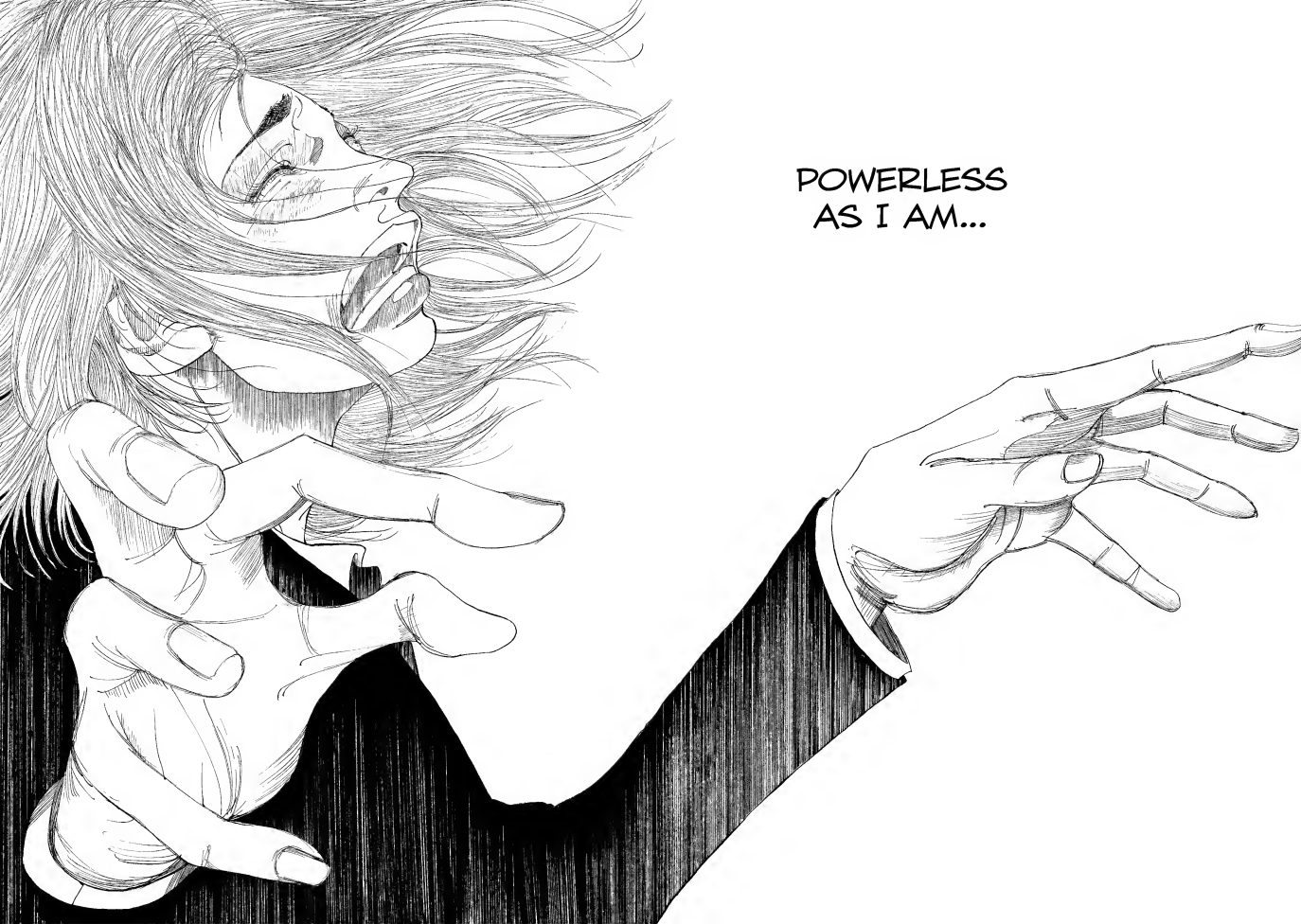
CHILDBIRTH ISN'T A DISEASE.
SO MOST PEOPLE ONLY THINK OF IT AS A JOYOUS OCCASION.

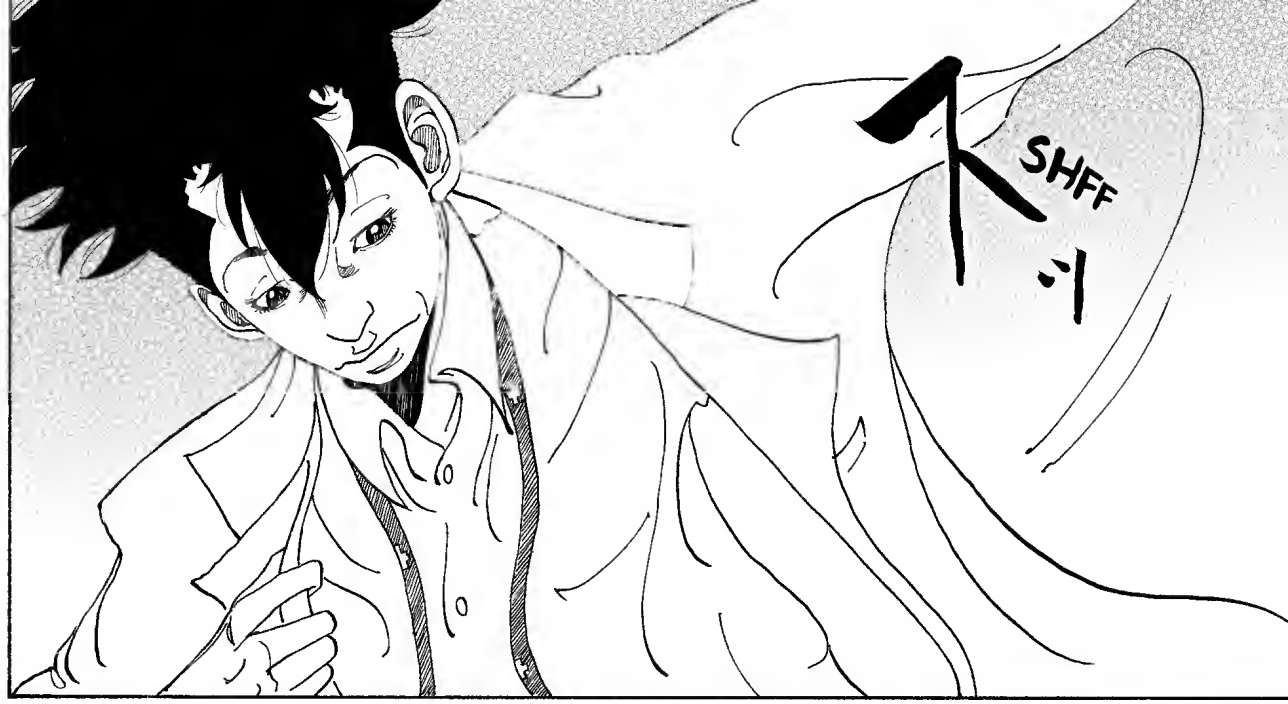

EVEN WHEN YOU'VE BEEN THROUGH AS MANY AS I HAVE, WITH EVERY DELIVERY YOU SEE...


...YOU REALIZE ALL OVER AGAIN THAT EACH ONE IS A MIRACLE.
THAT'S WHY IT BRINGS PEOPLE THE PUREST JOY AND THE DARKEST SORROW.

STILL...


WE MAY BE DOCTORS, BUT WE'RE ONLY HUMAN. IN THE FACE OF MIRACLES, WE'RE POWERLESS.
BZZZ
BZZZ


POWERLESS
AS I AM...

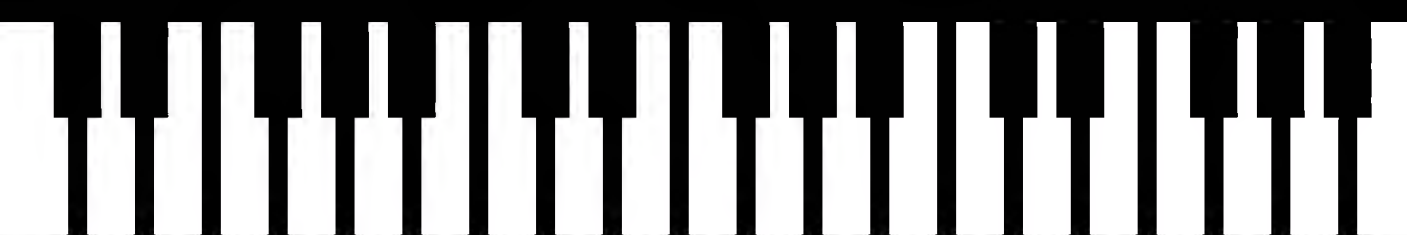

SHFF

I'VE GOT TO LIVE UP TO MY NAME.
SHIMOYA... WHAT'S THE SITUATION?
HER WATER'S BROKEN JUST 25 WEEKS IN.
WE NEED TO RUN A C-SECTION!
PERSONA

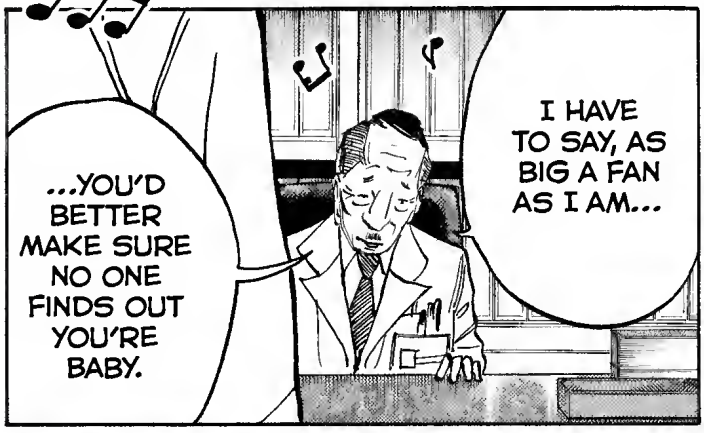
August 15th, 2013
I went to see Eitarou in Osaka! He's zero years old and cute!
—Tenta

TRACK 6

Caul Child



ARE YOU OKAY, MOM-MY?
MMGH...
WAIT HERE, ALL RIGHT?
ARE YOU OKAY?!
CATHOLIC HOSPITA
HUH?
WAIT... GET THESE SWEATS OFF OF ME.
SNAP
I'LL GO GET A DOCTOR!
IT'S COMING!!
THE BABY...

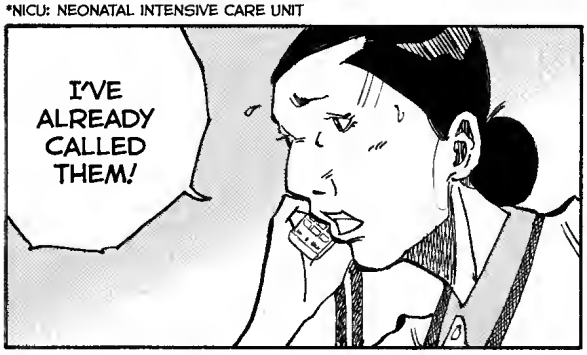

I HAVE TO SAY, AS BIG A FAN AS I AM...
...YOU'D BETTER MAKE SURE NO ONE FINDS OUT YOU'RE BABY.

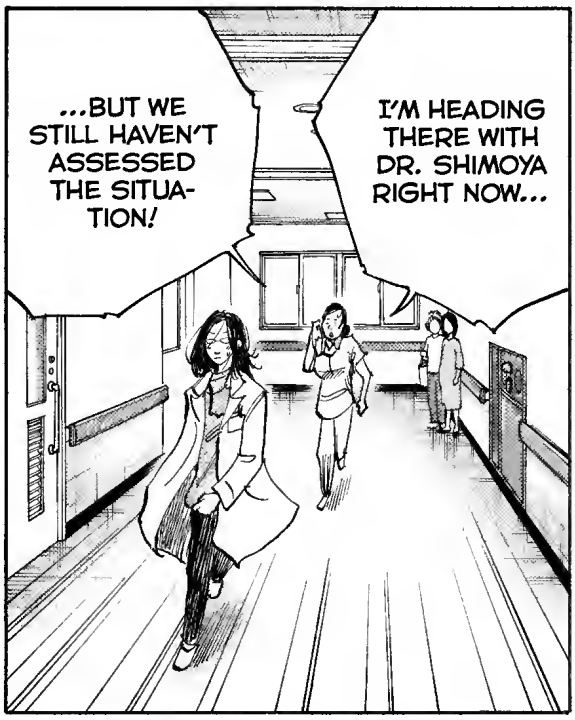
YOUR NEW ALBUM'S GREAT!
ADMINISTRATOR

IF RUMORS START TO GET OUT...
...WE COULD STAND TO LOSE LOTS OF PATIENTS!
BABY CAL
BABY

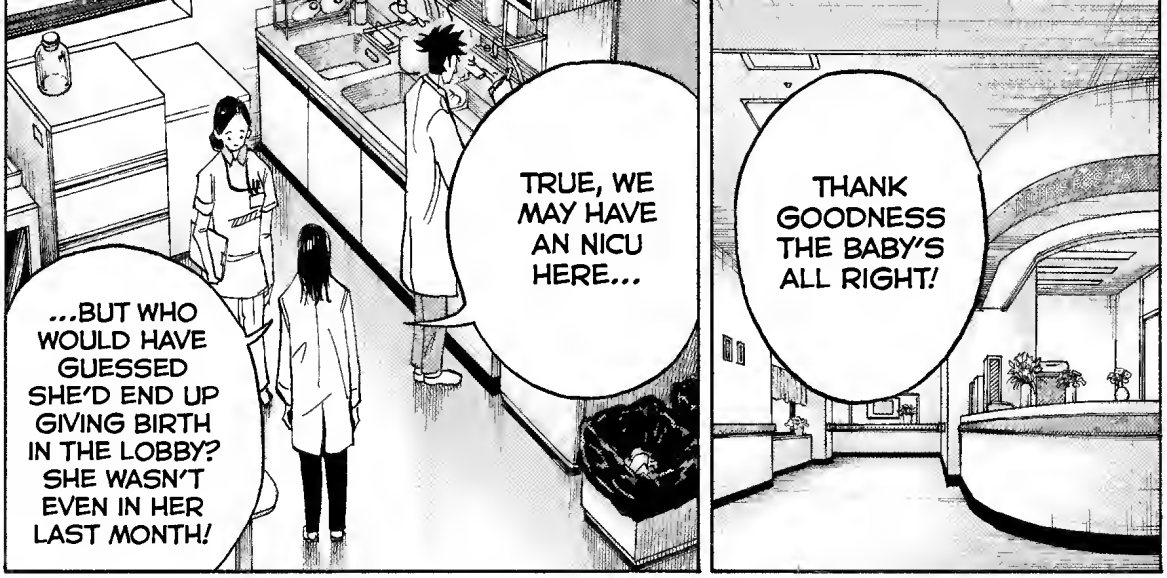
WE'VE GOT TO STAY IN THE BLACK, AFTER ALL!
JUST DO YOUR JOB LIKE ALWAYS...
...AND TRY TO KEEP THE PATIENTS HAPPY.
COUGH
WELL, ANYWAY...
THAT SHOULDN'T BE TOO HARD, CONSIDERING HOW SHORT-HANDED WE ARE.
HELLO?
Dr. Kounotori, a woman in her thirtieth week of pregnancy...
...
THAT ISN'T WHY I CALLED YOU HERE TODAY, DR. KOUNOTORI.
I'VE GOT SOME NEWS I THINK YOU'LL FIND QUITE SURPRISING!
EXCUSE ME FOR A MOMENT.
BEEP BEEP BEEP
YOU SEE, STARTING TODAY...

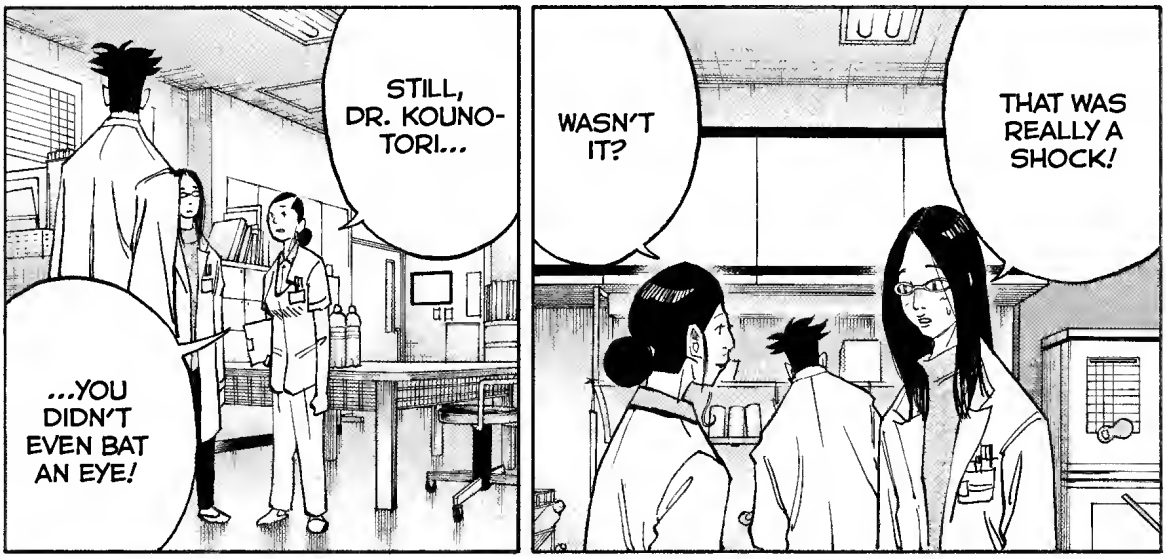
*NICU: NEONATAL INTENSIVE CARE UNIT





ALL RIGHT. GO AHEAD, THEN.
I'M SORRY.
YOU SEE... STARTING TODAY...
IT SEEMS A WOMAN JUST GAVE BIRTH RIGHT IN THE LOBBY ON THE FIRST FLOOR.
EXCUSE ME.
CLUNK
JUST BE SURE NOT TO OPEN US UP TO ANY LITIGATION!
AND YOU HAD SUCH A GOOD HIDING SPOT, TOO...
...
THERE HE GOES...


...BUT WHO WOULD HAVE GUESSED SHE'D END UP GIVING BIRTH IN THE LOBBY? SHE WASN'T EVEN IN HER LAST MONTH!
TRUE, WE MAY HAVE AN NICU HERE...
THANK GOODNESS THE BABY'S ALL RIGHT!


...YOU DIDN'T EVEN BAT AN EYE!
STILL, DR. KOUNO-TORI...
WASN'T IT?
THAT WAS REALLY A SHOCK!

REALLY? HOW DID YOU HANDLE IT?
THAT'S EASY.
HANDLE IT?
...SOME-THING SIMILAR HAPPENED ON MY WATCH.
WELL, BACK WHEN I WAS DOING MY RESIDEN-CY...

15 YEARS AGO
OKU CENTR
I PANICKED.
YAMAGUCHI-SAN'S BELLY IS LOOKING A LITTLE BIG FOR 32 WEEKS...
...SO SHE'S STOPPING BY AFTER HOURS TO MAKE SURE EVERYTHING'S ALL RIGHT.
SURE HAVE. CUP YAKI-SOBA!
GOT IT.
HAVE YOU HAD DINNER, DR. KOUNO-TORI?
THE OTHER MIDWIVES AND I WILL HAVE TO TAKE YOU OUT FOR PIG'S TROTTERS SOME TIME SOON!
PIG'S TROTTERS... LIKE, FEET...?
THAT'S NO GOOD FOR YOU!
I KNOW THEY DON'T PAY YOU RESIDENTS MUCH, BUT YOU NEED TO EAT SOME *REAL* FOOD!

HMM?
KOMATSU-SAN...
...
OKAY, YAMAGUCHI-SAN, LET'S BEGIN A PELVIC EXAM.
?!
SHE'S GOING INTO LABOR!
THE PLACENTA'S STARTING TO SEPARATE.
G... GOT IT...
PELVIC EXAMINATION R
I'LL PHONE PEDIATRICS AND HAVE THEM BRING A STRETCHER, DOCTOR.
DON'T PUT HER UNDERWEAR BACK ON. HAVE HER LIE DOWN AND WAIT ON THE BENCH IN THE HALL.
...

...
DOCTOR...
MY BABY'S GOING TO BE ALL RIGHT, ISN'T IT?
OF COURSE IT IS...
IS IT GOING TO BE ALL RIGHT?
THIS HOSPITAL DOESN'T HAVE AN NICU...
...AND THERE AREN'T ANY PEDIATRICIANS ON DUTY RIGHT NOW.
I'M SURE IT WON'T BE LONG.
DOCTOR...
I'M THE ONLY OBSTETRIC STAFF HERE RIGHT NOW, AND I'M JUST A RESIDENT...
DOCTOR!
YES?

WHAT'S... THIS...?
WHAT IN THE...
OH GOD... COULD IT BE?
A CAUL CHILD?!

DOCTOR?
CALM DOWN... CALM DOWN!
...
WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO?
I'VE ONLY EVER SEEN THIS IN TEXT-BOOKS!
...
WHAT DO WE DO...?
THE BABY'S BORN IN ITS FETAL MEM-BRANE. THE MOTHER'S WATER NEVER BREAKS...
CAUL BIRTH... CAUL BIRTH... CAUL BIRTH...
I NEED TO ACT FAST!!
I'VE GOT TO REMOVE THE CAUL IMMEDI-ATELY, BEFORE IT SUFFOCATES!
HUH?
THUD

?!
THUMP
チャッ
DOCTOR! GET ME A TOWEL!
K... KOMATSU-SAN!
...YOU'VE GOT WHAT THEY CALL A "CAUL CHILD."
YAMA-GUCHI-SAN...
SNIP
チョキン
RIGHT!
...
U...UM... RIGHT!
SOME UMBILICAL CORD SCISSORS, TOO!

I'M SURE YOUR BABY'S GOING TO BE FINE.
THIS IS WHAT THEY'RE TALKING ABOUT. IT'S A GOOD OMEN!
YOU KNOW HOW IN RUSSIA, THEY SAY LUCKY PEOPLE WERE "BORN IN A SHIRT?"
WE JUST NEED TO BORROW HIM FOR A MOMENT FIRST.
...
NOD
FIND ME AN NICU WITH ROOM FOR THE BABY IMME-DIATELY.
LOOK AFTER YAMAGUCHI-SAN FOR ME, TOO, OKAY?
GOT IT.
...
DR. KOUNO-TORI!
LET'S HURRY ALONG, NOW!
HUH ...?
R-RIGHT!

WHAT IF WE CAN'T SAVE HIM...?
HE'S GOT CYANOSIS, TOO...
...
ROGER.
WE'VE ATTACHED A PULSE OXIMETER.
IN USE
WHAT IS HE, ABOUT 1500 GRAMS?
THE BABY'S HEART-BEAT IS TOO SLOW...
YOU EVEN LET THE PATIENT SEE YOU LIKE THAT!
YOU'VE BEEN MAKING QUITE A FACE THIS WHOLE TIME, DOCTOR!
...BUT IN THE PATIENT'S EYES, YOU'RE AN OBSTETRICIAN!
MAYBE YOU THINK YOU'RE OFF THE HOOK BECAUSE YOU'RE JUST A RESIDENT...

WE NEED TO SERVE OUR PATIENTS WITH A SMILE.
ESPECIALLY WHEN THINGS LOOK BAD.
...
HANG IN THERE, LITTLE GUY.
WHSH
YOUR MOM'S WAITING FOR YOU!
WHSH
KOMATSU-SAN, HIS HEART RATE'S RISING.
GOOD.
WHSH
WHSH
WHSH
W...

WAHH!
WAHH!
HE'S CRYING!
WH...
WAHH!
WAHH!
PHEW!
WE FOUND AN NICU TO TAKE THE BABY, TOO!
THE ON-CALL PEDIATRICIAN'S HERE!

KOMATSU-SAN...
...CAN YOU HANDLE IT?
DR. KOUNO-TORI...
...LET'S GO UP-DATE THE MOTHER ON THE SITUA-TION.
ME? A DOCTOR?
BUT I COULDN'T DO ANYTHING FOR HER!
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?
YOU'RE THE DOCTOR HERE, YOU KNOW!
TAKE A LOOK AT THE BABY.
....
WAH...
...
WELL, THEN, I GUESS YOU'LL JUST HAVE TO BECOME THE KIND OF DOCTOR WHO CAN DO EVERYTHING.

IT'S NOT THE SIZE OF THE HOSPITAL OR STATE-OF-THE-ART EQUIPMENT THAT LEAVES THE STRONGEST IMPRESSION ON OUR PATIENTS... IT'S THE MIDWIVES.
YOU CAN'T TURN YOUR BACK ON A LEARNING EXPERIENCE, DOCTOR.
KOMATSU-SAN AND I USED TO GO OUT DRINKING TOGETH-ER AFTER HOURS.
BEFORE I EVER BECAME BABY, SHE ALWAYS SHOWED UP FOR MY CONCERTS, TOO.
THANK YOU, DOCTOR!
THERE'S A LOT WE OB/GYN'S CAN LEARN FROM THE MIDWIVES WHO ARE ALWAYS THERE TO HELP US.
YOUR BABY'S FINE NOW, MA'AM.
ONCE MY RESIDENCY ENDED, AND I STOPPED WORKING AT THAT HOSPITAL...
TAKE CARE OF YOUR-SELF.
...I NEVER SAW HER AGAI—?!
YOU'VE GROWN, DOCTOR.

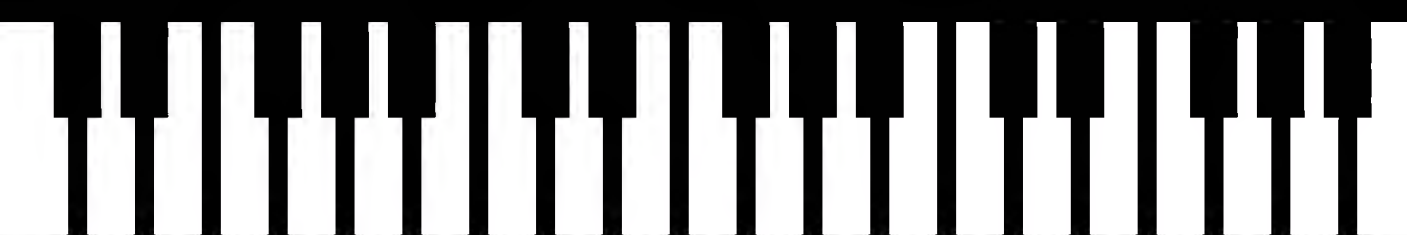
C
DOCTOR
SHINOMIYA HA
PERSONA CATHOLIC HOSPIT
YES, MA'AM. YOU'RE HAVING A MIS-CARRIAGE.
A MIS-CARRIAGE?
WHAT?
IT'S NOT TOO UNCOM-MON.
B-BUT ...
IT HAPPENS IN THREE OUT OF 20 CASES.
THERE'S A 15% CHANCE OF MISCAR-RIAGE DURING THE FIRST TRIMESTER.
DOCTOR?
...
NEXT, PLEASE.
WOW! DR. KOUNOTORI LOOKS SO YOUNG!
NURSE STATION
AND PLEASE, LOOK AFTER THE PATIENT.

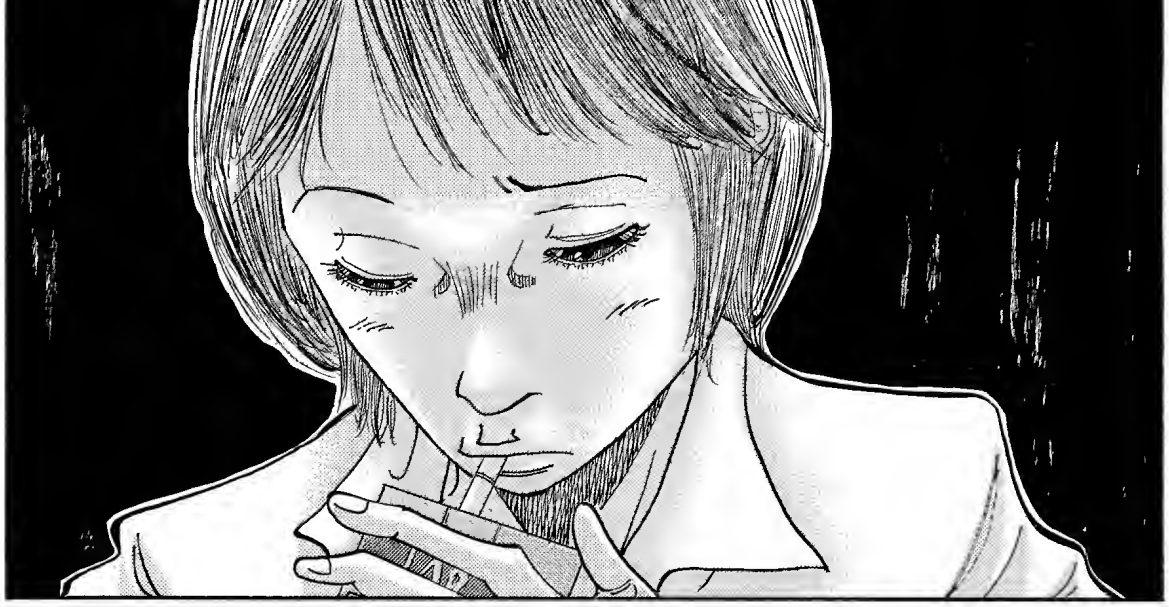
CAUL CHILD / END

August 25th, 2013
I ate lots of grapes. I ate them all by myself!
—Tenta

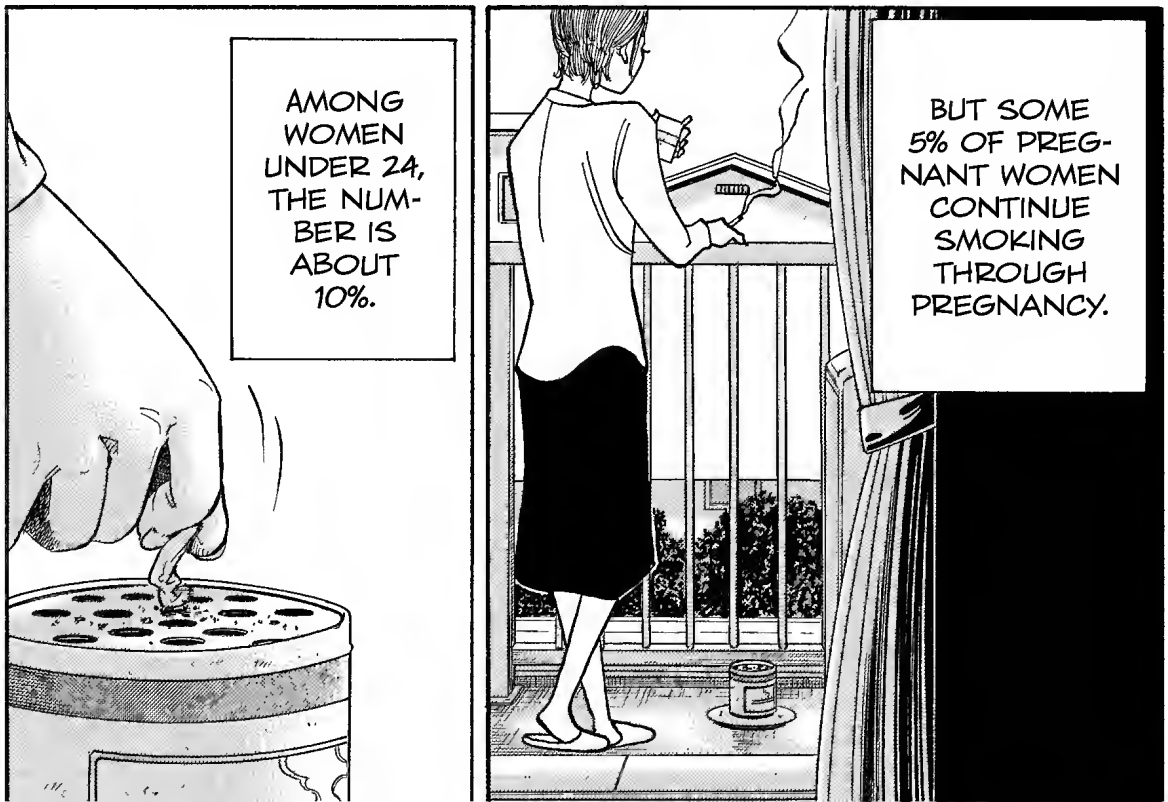
TRACK 7

Maternal Smoking





MANY WOMEN QUIT SMOKING ONCE THEY LEARN THEY'RE PREGNANT.
IRK
6
SMOKING WHILE PREGNANT INCREASES THE RISKS OF FETAL GROWTH RESTRICTION, PREMATURE BIRTH, AND OTHER PROBLEMS.
ACCORDING TO EPIDEMIOLOGICAL STATISTICS, WOMEN WHO SMOKE FACE TWICE THE RISK OF "LOW" BIRTH WEIGHT AND APPROXIMATELY THREE TIMES THE RISK OF PREMATURE BIRTH COMPARED TO WOMEN WHO DON'T SMOKE DURING PREGNANCY


AMONG WOMEN UNDER 24, THE NUMBER IS ABOUT 10%.
BUT SOME 5% OF PREGNANT WOMEN CONTINUE SMOKING THROUGH PREGNANCY.

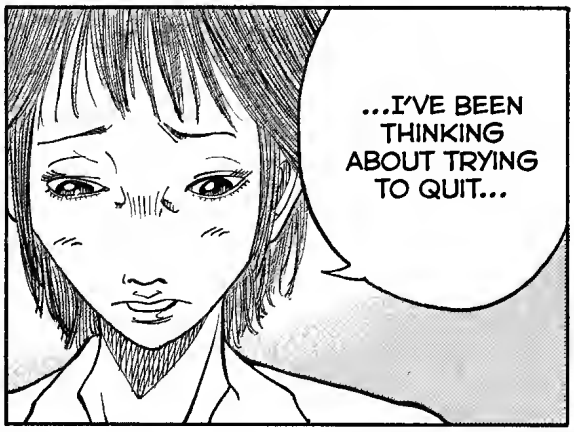
THEY JUST CAN'T KICK THE HABIT.
I SMELL SMOKE...

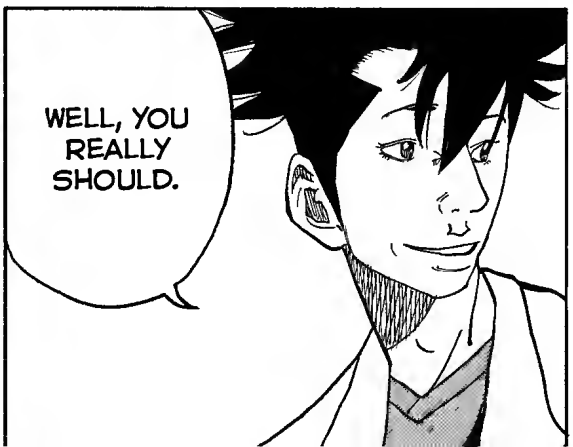
HUH...?

KIMURA-SAN...
...DO YOU SMOKE?

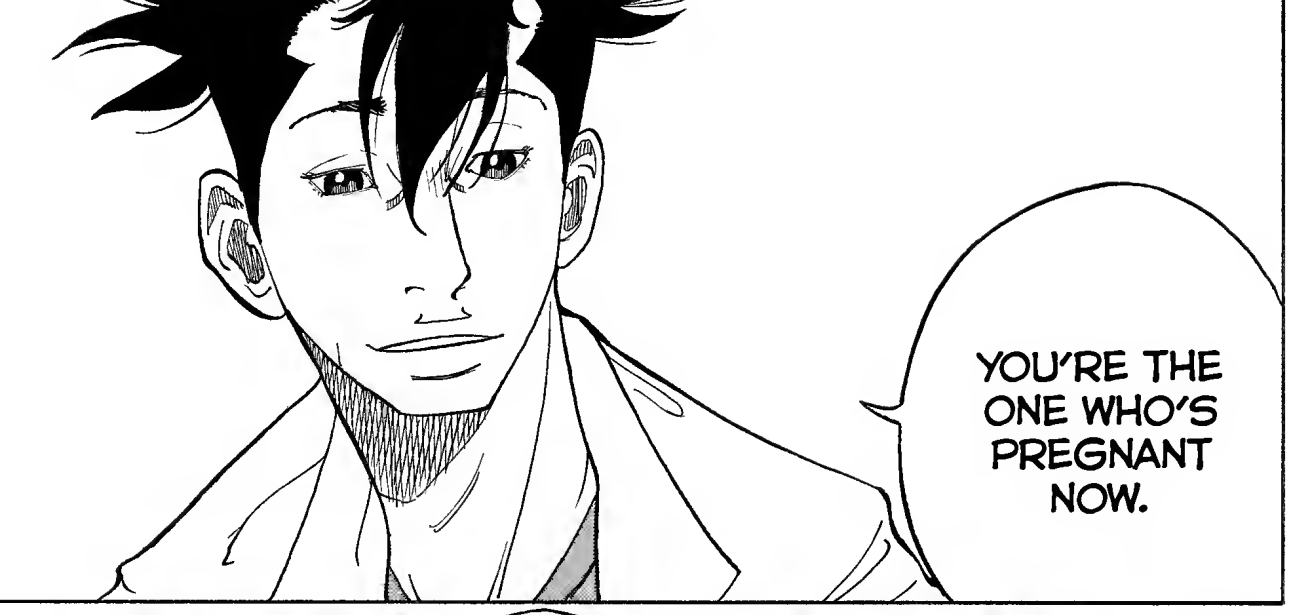
REALLY?
NOT ON YOU, KOMATSU-SAN.
SNIFF SNIFF

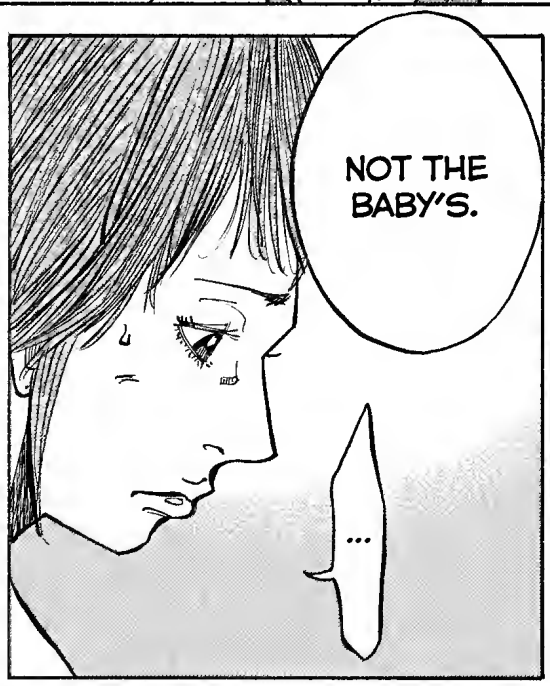
AT LEAST UNTIL YOUR BABY'S SAFELY BORN...
...AND YOU'RE DONE BREAST-FEEDING.


...I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT TRYING TO QUIT...


WELL, YOU REALLY SHOULD.

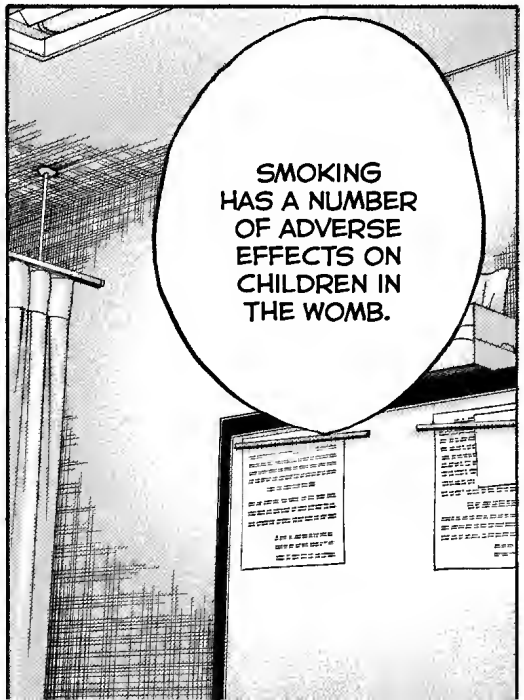
WELL, WHEN I TELL MYSELF, "YOU'VE GOTTA QUIT, YOU'VE GOTTA QUIT..."
...IT JUST KIND OF PUTS ME ON EDGE...
SPEAKING AS A DOCTOR, I'D RECOM-MEND YOU QUIT FOR GOOD, BUT...
...
SO, YOU KNOW...
...CAN'T BE ANY GOOD FOR THE BABY, EITHER.
I FIGURE ALL THAT STRESS...
WELL, THAT WAS YOUR FRIEND. THIS IS YOU, KIMURA-SAN.
5
...
HER BABY TURNED OUT FINE...
PLUS, I'VE GOT A FRIEND WHO DIDN'T QUIT SMOKING WHILE SHE WAS PREGNANT.


YOU'RE THE ONE WHO'S PREGNANT NOW.


NOT THE BABY'S.
...

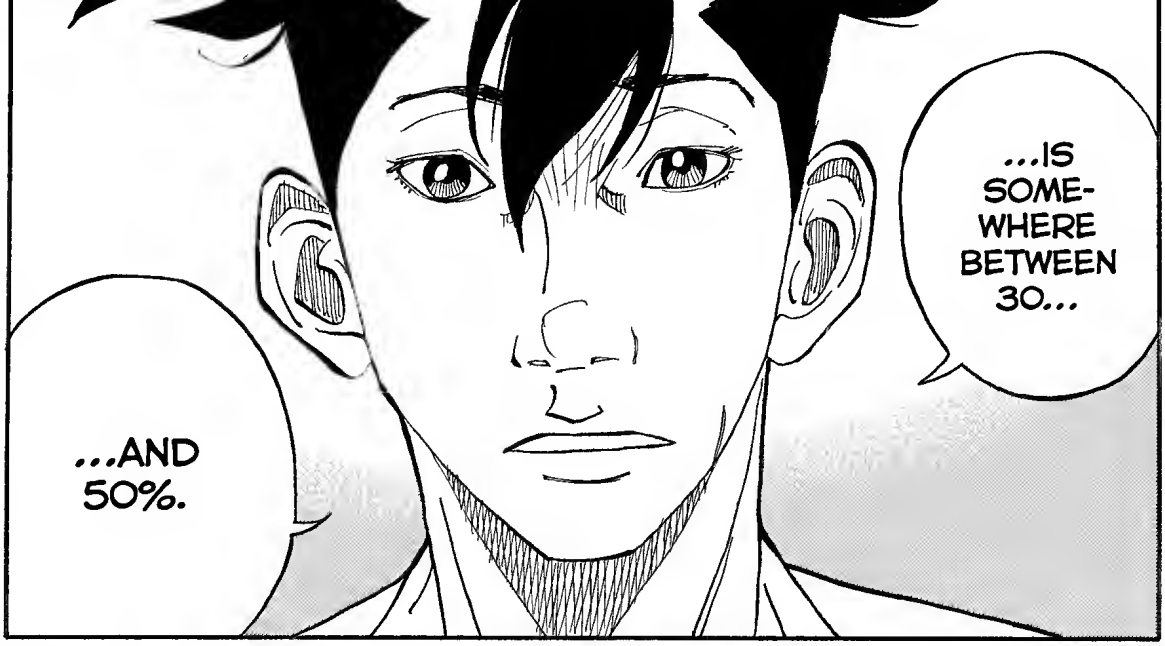
BESIDES, THE STRESS OF QUITTING SMOKING...
...IS ON YOUR SHOULDERS, KIMURA-SAN.

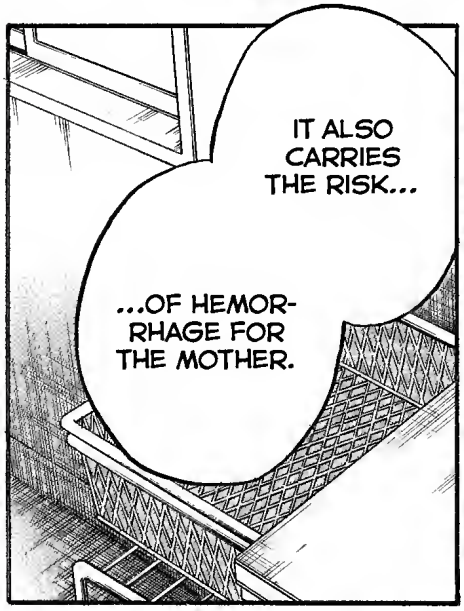
FIRST, THERE'S THE MATTER OF BIRTH WEIGHT.

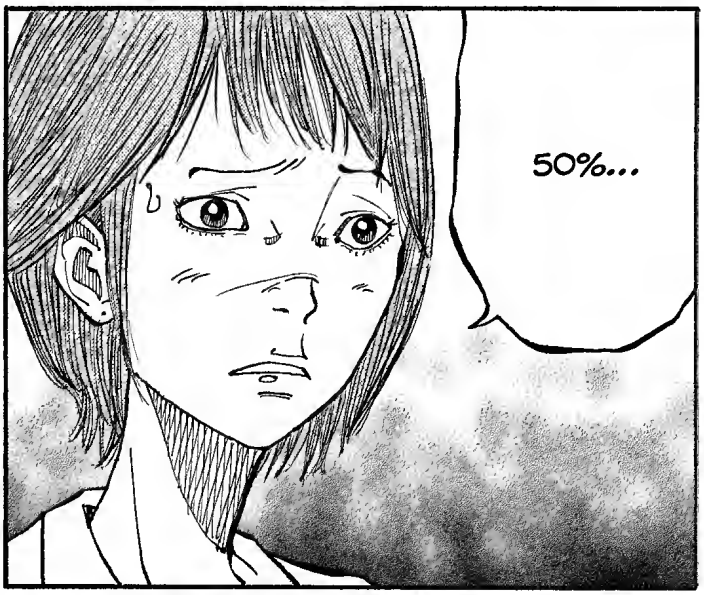

SMOKING HAS A NUMBER OF ADVERSE EFFECTS ON CHILDREN IN THE WOMB.

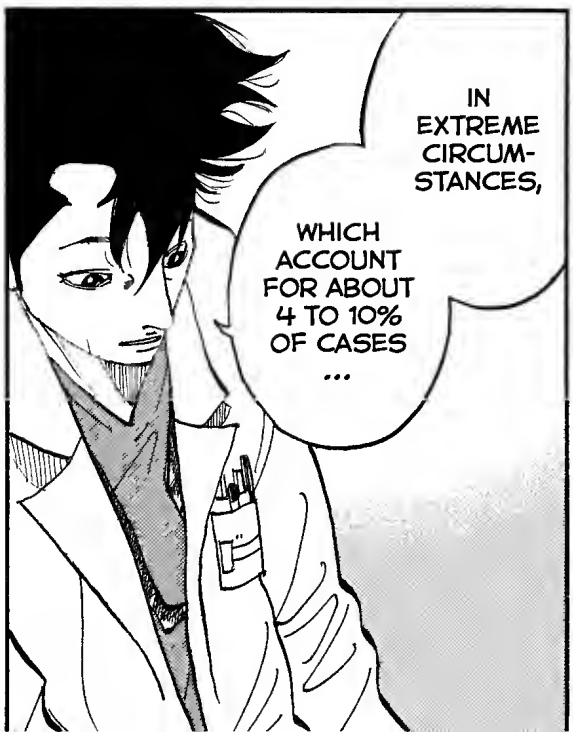
SMOKING CAUSES YOUR BLOOD VESSELS TO CONSTRICT.
THAT MEANS YOUR BABY DOESN'T RECEIVE ADEQUATE OXYGEN OR NUTRIENTS.
THAT INCREASES THE RISK OF LOW BIRTH WEIGHT.
FURTHERMORE, THERE'S SOME EVIDENCE THAT SMOKING...
...CAN INFLUENCE THE PSYCHOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHILD, AS WELL.
IT DOUBLES YOUR RISK OF MISCARRIAGE.
AND ON TOP OF THAT, YOUR CHANCES OF PREMATURE DELIVERY MAY INCREASE BY AS MUCH AS 50%.
BUT WHAT WE'RE REALLY WORRIED ABOUT HERE IS THE CHANCE OF PLACENTAL ABRUPTION.

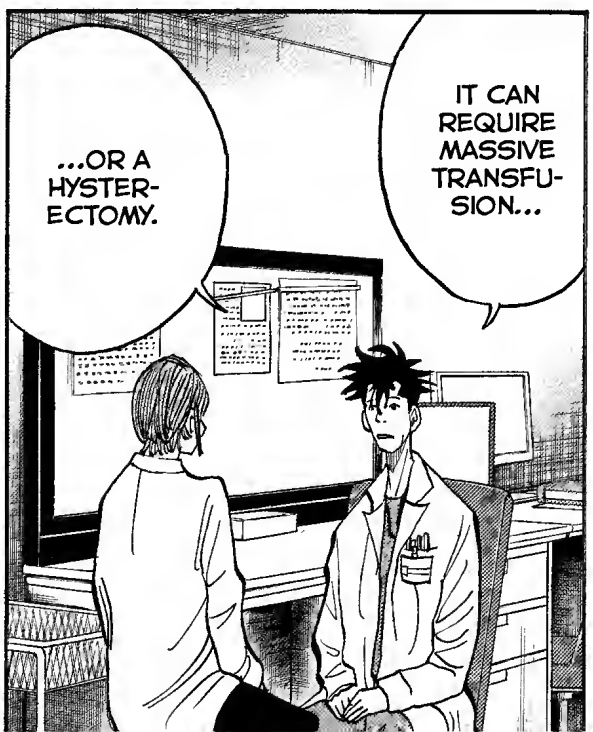
PLACENTAL ABRUPTION.
PREMATURE SEPARATION OF THE PLACENTA.
PLACENTAL ...
IT CUTS OFF THE SUPPLY OF OXYGEN AND NUTRIENTS ENTIRELY...
...RESULTING IN HYPO-XEMIA AND CIRCULATORY FAILURE.
THAT'S WHEN IN PREGNANCY, OR DURING BIRTH...
...THE PLA-CENTA SEPA-RATES FROM THE WALL OF THE UTERUS BEFORE THE BABY IS BORN.
YOU MEAN MY BABY...
...COULD DIE?
IN BIRTHS WHERE PREMATURE SEPARATION OF THE PLACENTA OCCURS, THE INFANT MORTALITY RATE...
IN A WORST-CASE SCENARIO, IT LEADS TO FETAL DEATH.


...IS SOME-WHERE BETWEEN 30...
...AND 50%.


IT ALSO CARRIES THE RISK...
...OF HEMOR-RHAGE FOR THE MOTHER.

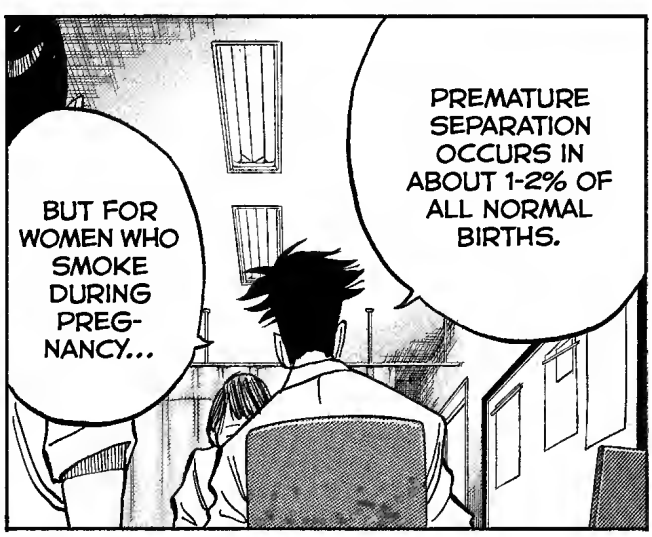

50%...

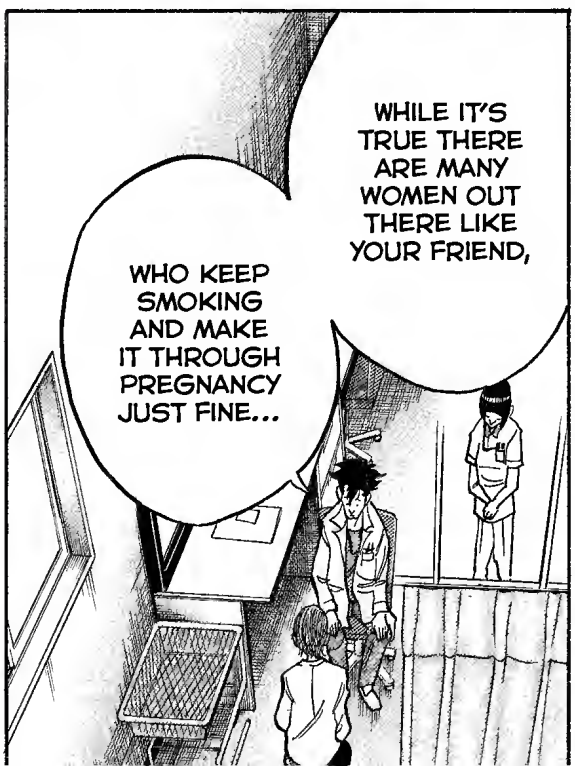

IN EXTREME CIRCUM-STANCES,
WHICH ACCOUNT FOR ABOUT 4 TO 10% OF CASES ...

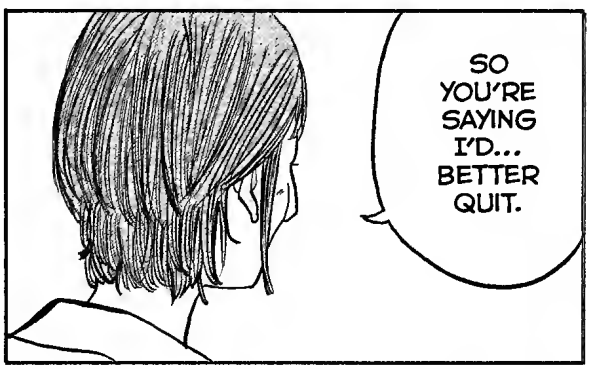

IT CAN REQUIRE MASSIVE TRANSFU-SION...
...OR A HYSTER-ECTOMY.

...IT LEADS TO THE DEATH OF THE MOTHER.
...

...THE RISK ESSENTIALLY DOUBLES.
...


PREMATURE SEPARATION OCCURS IN ABOUT 1-2% OF ALL NORMAL BIRTHS.
BUT FOR WOMEN WHO SMOKE DURING PREG-NANCY...

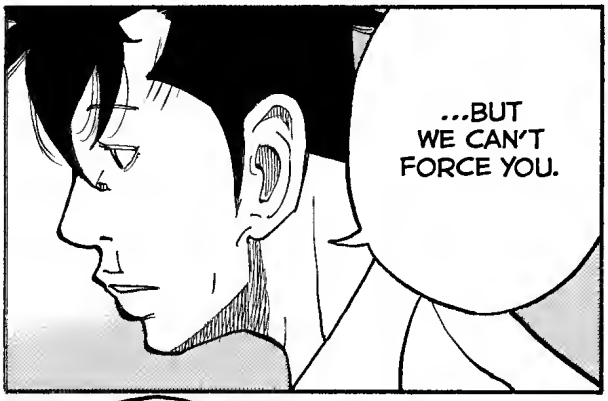

WHILE IT'S TRUE THERE ARE MANY WOMEN OUT THERE LIKE YOUR FRIEND,
WHO KEEP SMOKING AND MAKE IT THROUGH PREGNANCY JUST FINE...


SO YOU'RE SAYING I'D... BETTER QUIT.

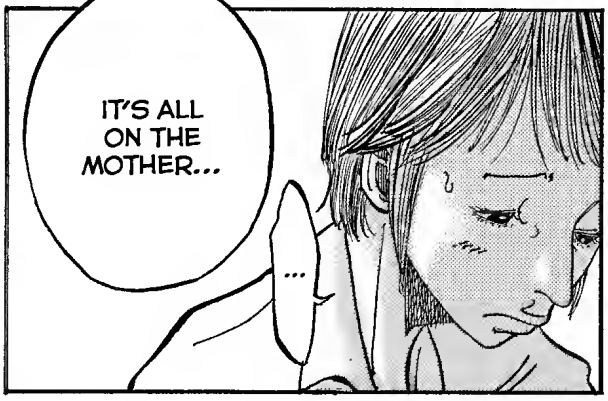
THAT'S RIGHT.

...
OF COURSE, EVEN WHEN THERE *ARE* PROBLEMS...
...THERE'S NO QUESTION THAT IT INCREASES RISK TO THE MOTHER AND CHILD.
...WHO'S TO SAY FOR CERTAIN THAT SMOKING WAS THE DIRECT CAUSE?
...
THAT'S WHY IT SCARES US.

SOME WOMEN BLAME THEMSELVES THEIR ENTIRE LIVES...
...BECAUSE THEY WEREN'T ABLE TO QUIT SMOKING AND SOMETHING WENT WRONG.


...BUT WE CAN'T FORCE YOU.

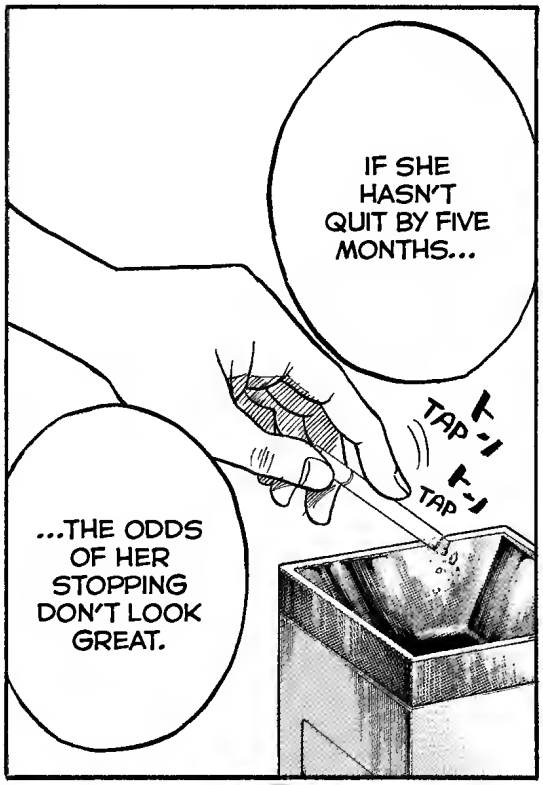
WE CAN ASK YOU TO QUIT SMOKING...

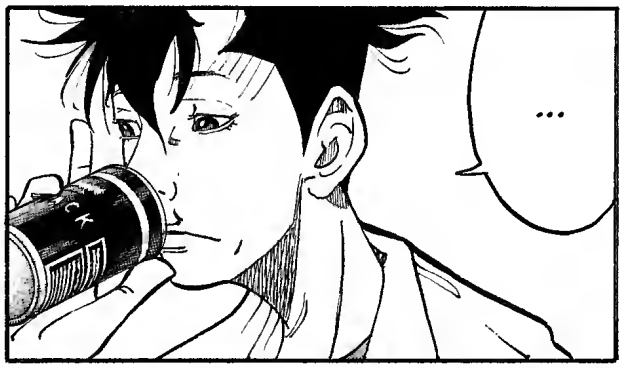

IT'S ALL ON THE MOTHER...
...

...TO QUIT FOR HER BABY'S SAKE.
WHILE THE RISKS DIFFER FROM PERSON TO PERSON, SMOKING MAY CAUSE NICOTINE ADDICTION.

SHFF
...
...
...
DOCTOR
SHINOMIYA HARUKI
PERSONA CATHOLIC HOSPITAL

YOU HAD TO GO AND TELL THE POOR WOMAN...
...ALL ABOUT PLACENTAL ABRUPTION, HUH, DR. KOUNOTORI?


IF SHE HASN'T QUIT BY FIVE MONTHS...
TAP
TAP
...THE ODDS OF HER STOPPING DON'T LOOK GREAT.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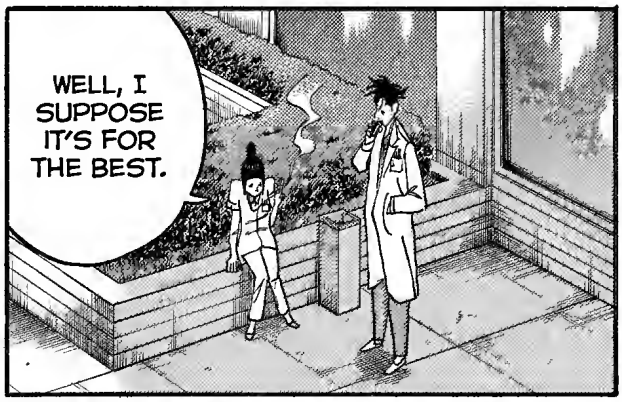
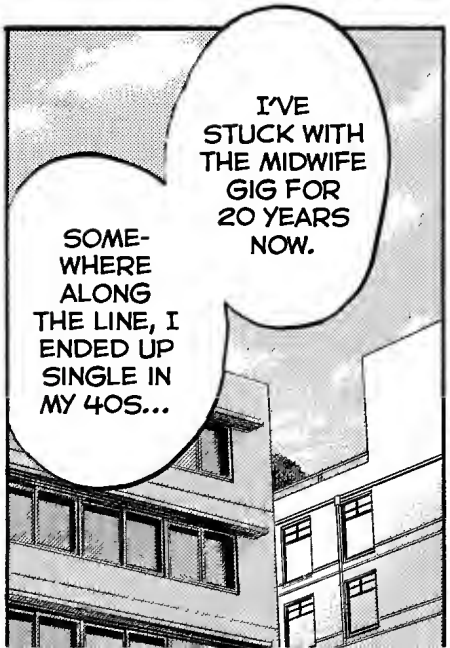
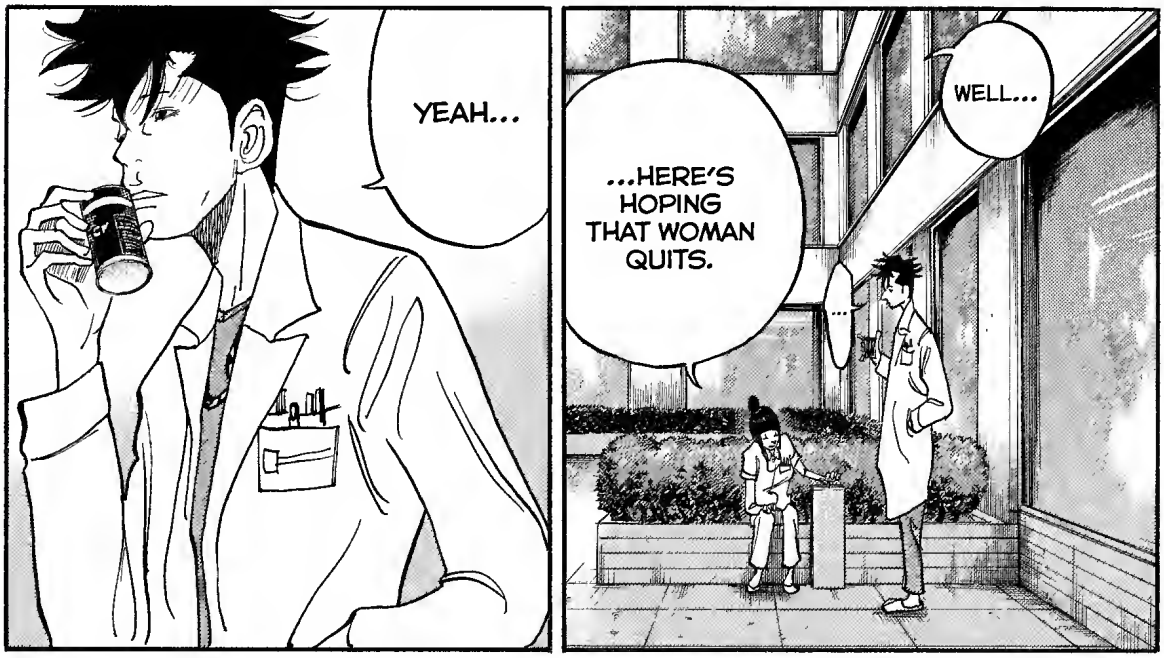

WELL, I SUPPOSE IT'S FOR THE BEST.


I'VE STUCK WITH THE MIDWIFE GIG FOR 20 YEARS NOW.
SOME-WHERE ALONG THE LINE, I ENDED UP SINGLE IN MY 40S...

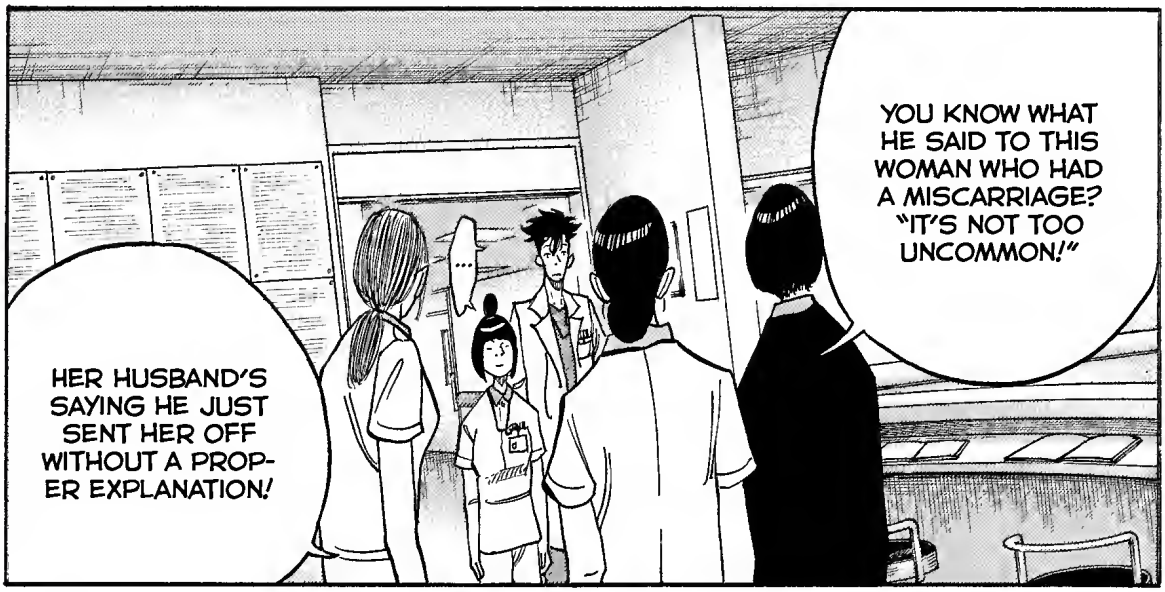
WELL, I'M NOT PREGNANT, AM I?
SHOULDN'T YOU THINK ABOUT QUIT-TING, TOO, KOMATSU-SAN?

...PIG TROT-TERS?
THE ONLY LOVER I NEED IS THIS CIGARETTE RIGHT HERE.
THAT AND A COLD BEER WAITING FOR ME BACK HOME.
WELL, AND...
GEH HEH HEH!


YEAH...
WELL...
...HERE'S HOPING THAT WOMAN QUITS.
...

GOD, AGAIN?
I WISH HE'D GIVE IT A REST ALREADY...
STATION

WE GOT ANOTHER COMPLAINT ABOUT DR. SHINOMIYA.
WHAT'S UP?
WE'RE ALWAYS THE ONES TO FOLLOW UP WITH HIS PATIENTS, AFTER ALL!


HER HUSBAND'S SAYING HE JUST SENT HER OFF WITHOUT A PROPER EXPLANATION!
...
YOU KNOW WHAT HE SAID TO THIS WOMAN WHO HAD A MISCARRIAGE? "IT'S NOT TOO UNCOMMON!"

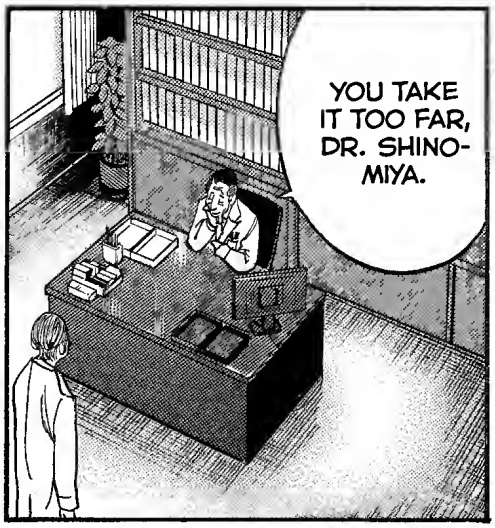
ADMINISTRATOR
THE ADMINISTRATOR CALLED HIM INTO HIS OFFICE.

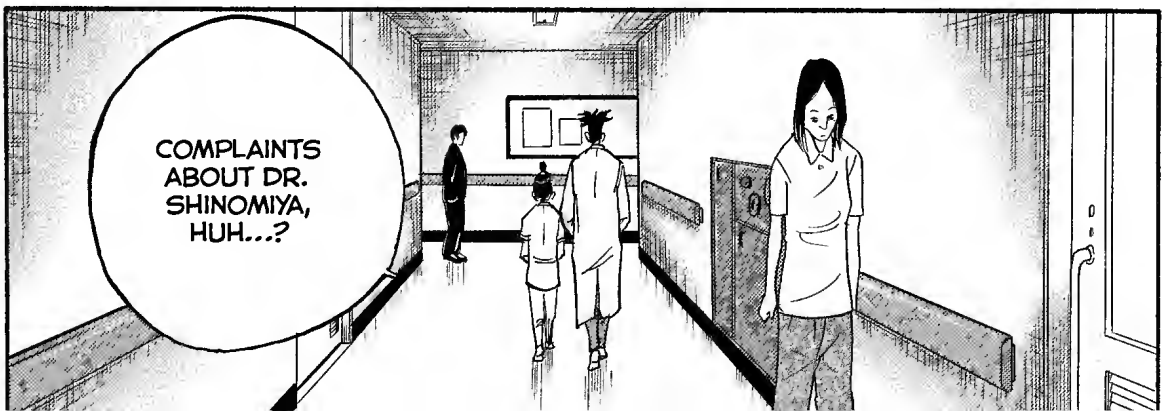
SO... WHERE'S SHINOMIYA?

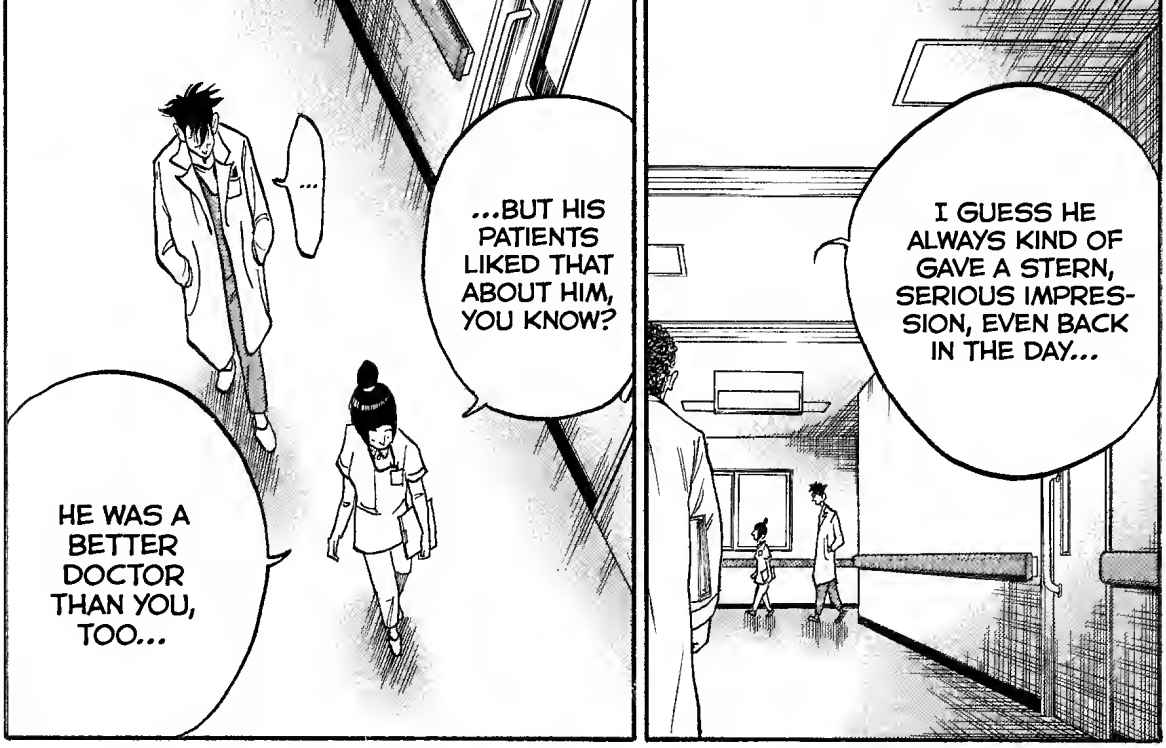
BUT WHEN IT COMES DOWN TO IT, A HOSPITAL THRIVES ON ITS PATIENTS.
DR. SHINOMIYA, BELIEVE ME, I'M WELL AWARE YOU'RE A CAPABLE DOCTOR.
YOU COULD STAND TO HANDLE THAT RELATIONSHIP A LITTLE BETTER.
...
JUST BE A BIT KINDER WITH THE PATIENTS.
...
BE A BIT GENTLER WHEN YOU'RE EXPLAINING THINGS TO THEM. THAT'S ALL I ASK.
...AND A DOCTOR WHO'S HATED BY HIS PATIENTS, BUT CAN SAVE MOST OF THEM.
TELL ME, SIR... CONSIDER A DOCTOR WHO'S LOVED BY HIS PATIENTS, BUT CAN'T SAVE ANY OF THEM...

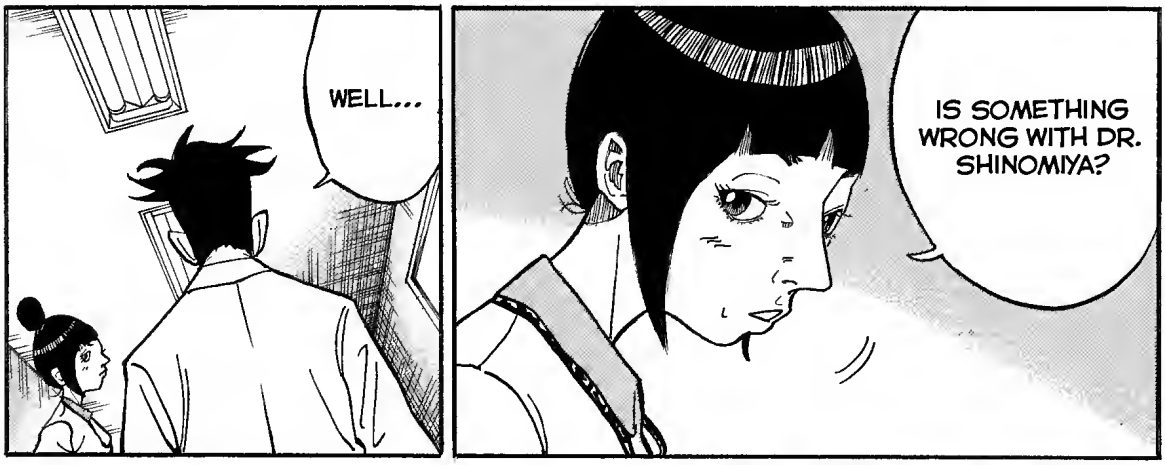
WHO WOULD *YOU* WANT OPERATING ON YOU?
YOU NEVER CHANGE...

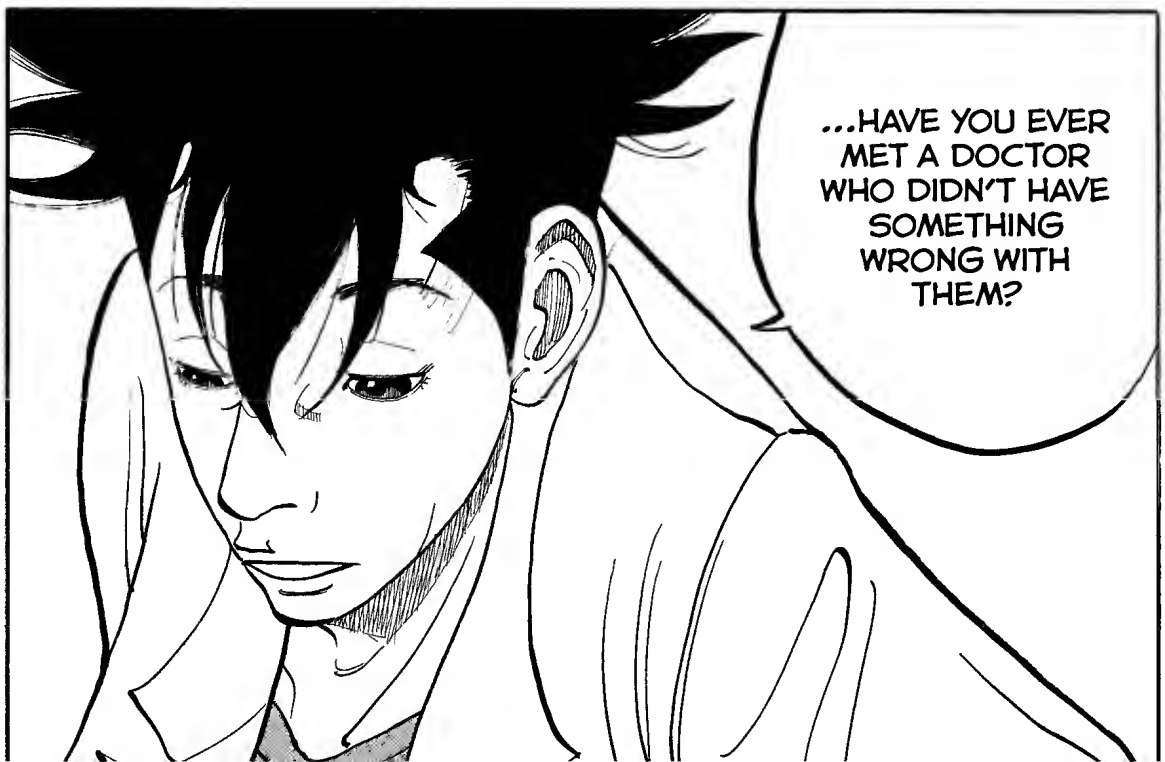
LOOK. IT'S NOT MY JOB...
...TO TREAT THE PATIENTS KINDLY.


YOU TAKE IT TOO FAR, DR. SHINO-MIYA.

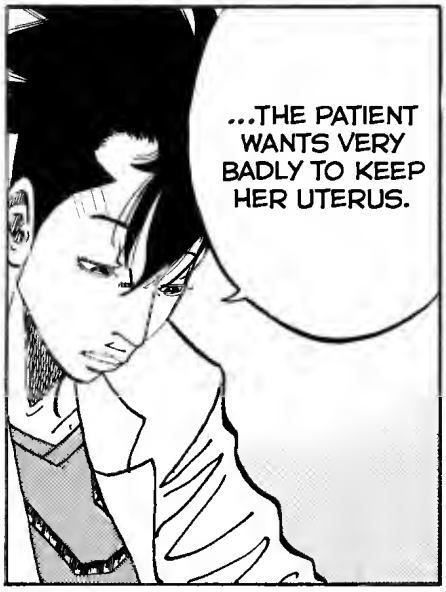

COMPLAINTS ABOUT DR. SHINOMIYA, HUH...?

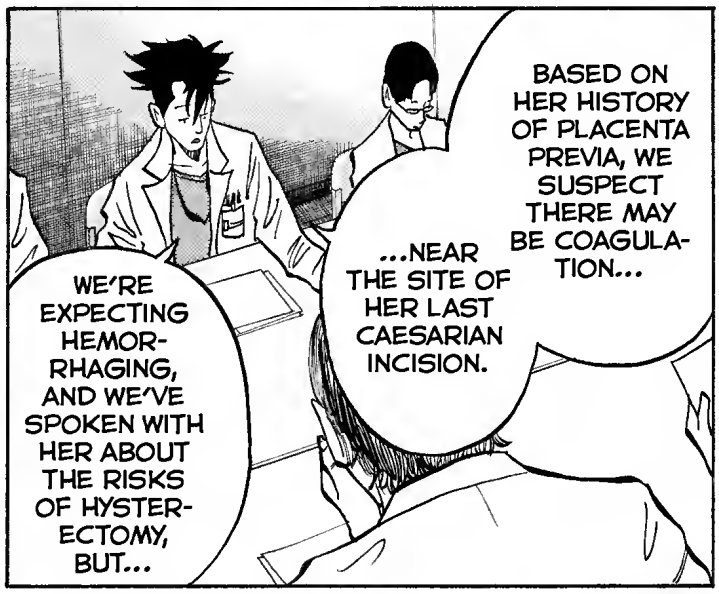

...
...BUT HIS PATIENTS LIKED THAT ABOUT HIM, YOU KNOW?
HE WAS A BETTER DOCTOR THAN YOU, TOO...
I GUESS HE ALWAYS KIND OF GAVE A STERN, SERIOUS IMPRESSION, EVEN BACK IN THE DAY...

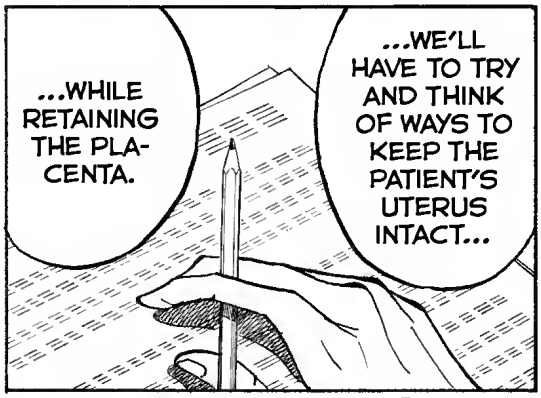

WELL...
IS SOMETHING WRONG WITH DR. SHINOMIYA?

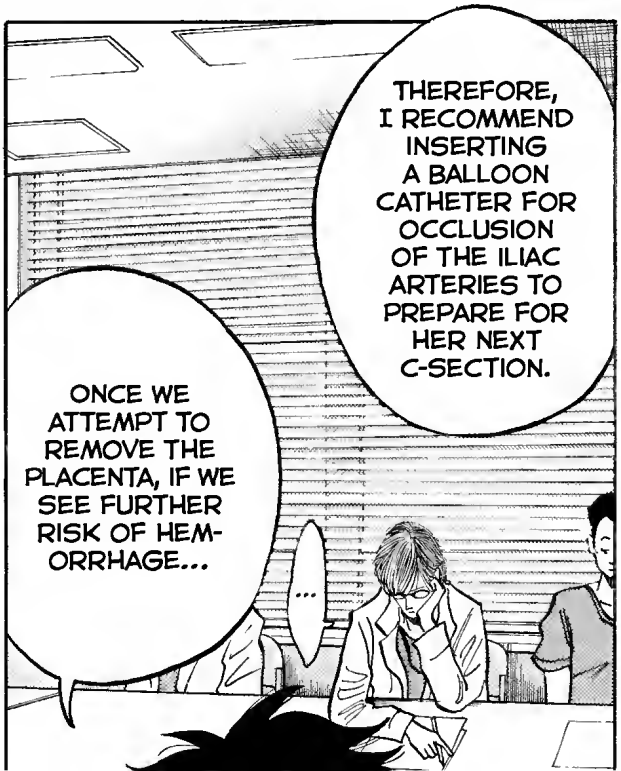

...HAVE YOU EVER MET A DOCTOR WHO DIDN'T HAVE SOMETHING WRONG WITH THEM?

*G AND P: GRAVIDITY AND PARITY. NUMBER OF PREGNANCIES IN TOTAL AND NUMBER CARRIED TO FETAL VIABILITY.



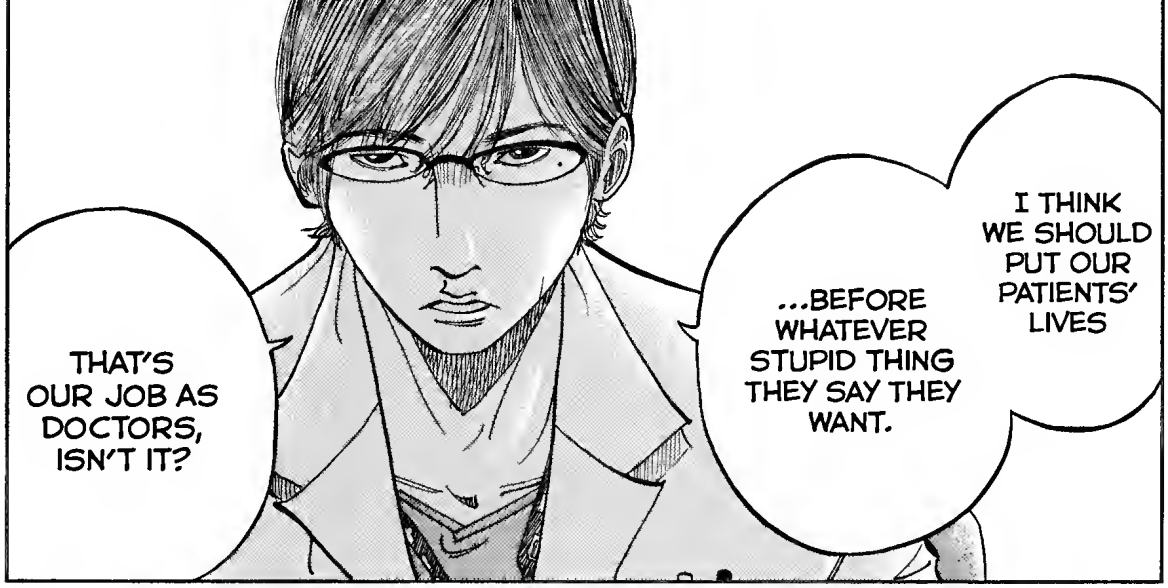


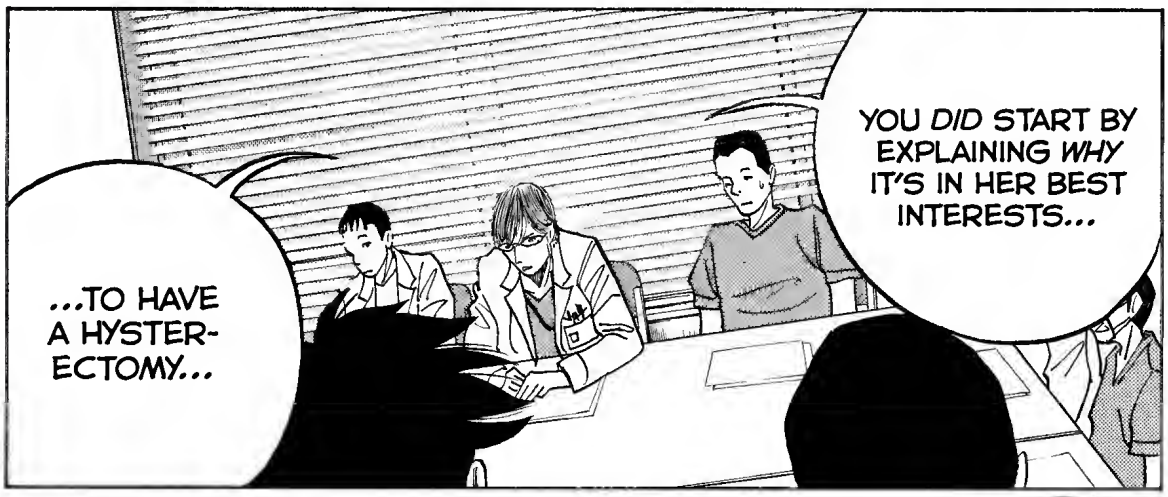


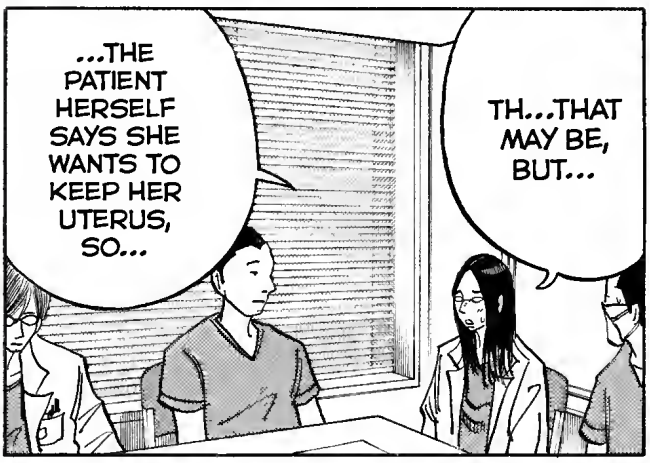


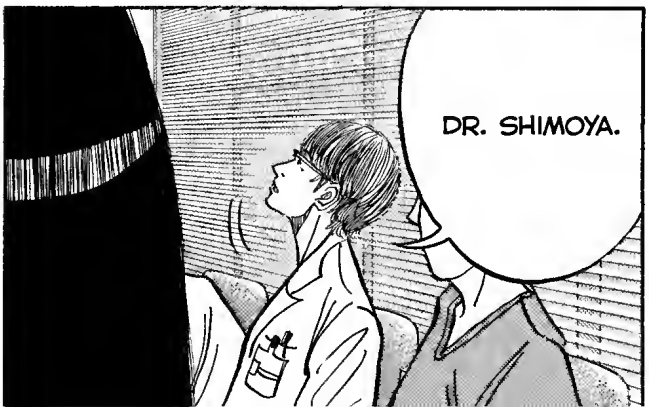
WHY GO TO ALL THE TROUBLE?
JUST REMOVE HER UTERUS.

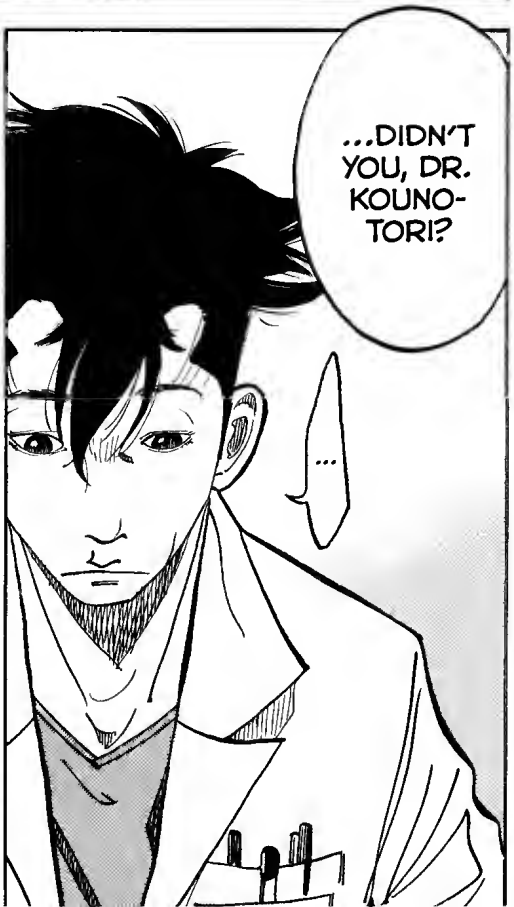
THE WOMAN'S GOT TWO KIDS ALREADY, RIGHT?
CONFERENCE ROOM
AND EVEN IF WE MANAGE TO PULL IT OFF...
...
WHAT'S THE POINT OF THAT?
...KNOWING THE THREAT IT POSES TO THE PATIENT'S LIFE.
SO WE WORK OURSELVES TO THE BONE TO SAVE HER UTERUS...
SUPPOSE SHE DEVELOPS PLACENTA PERCRETA. WHAT THEN?
...
ALL IT MEANS IS THE *NEXT* TIME SHE GETS PREGNANT,
SHE FACES EVEN *GREATER* RISK.
THEN SHE'LL BE IN SERIOUS TROUBLE.


I THINK WE SHOULD PUT OUR PATIENTS' LIVES
...BEFORE WHATEVER STUPID THING THEY SAY THEY WANT.
THAT'S OUR JOB AS DOCTORS, ISN'T IT?

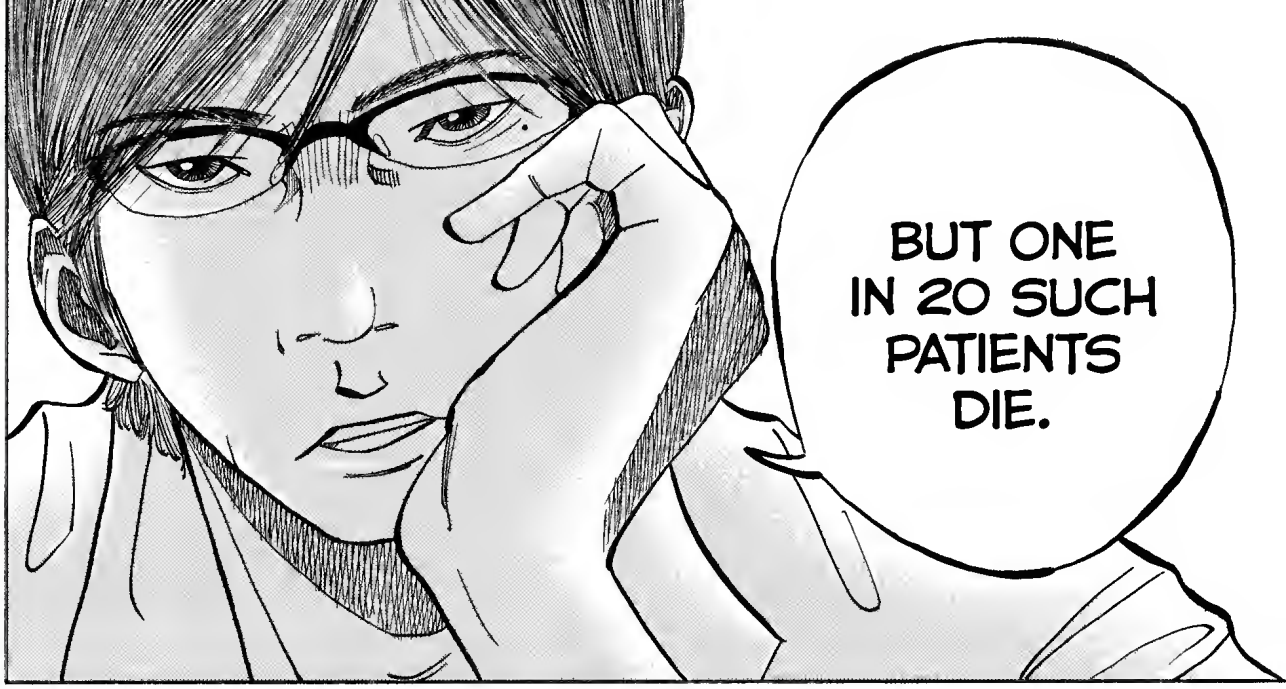

YOU *DID* START BY EXPLAINING *WHY* IT'S IN HER BEST INTERESTS...
...TO HAVE A HYSTER-ECTOMY...


TH...THAT MAY BE, BUT...
...THE PATIENT HERSELF SAYS SHE WANTS TO KEEP HER UTERUS, SO...

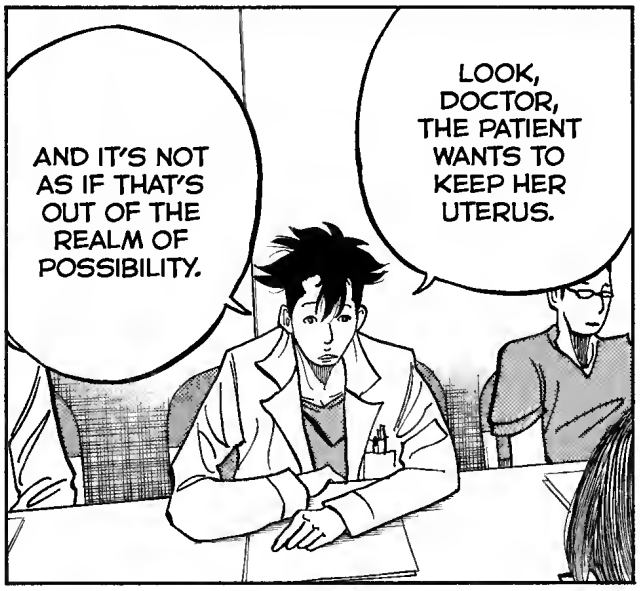

DR. SHIMOYA.


...DIDN'T YOU, DR. KOUNO-TORI?
...

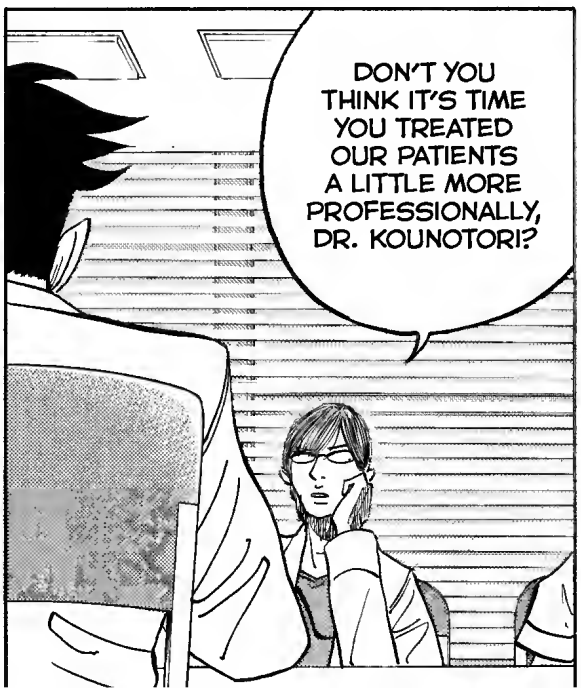
THE MATERNAL MORTALITY RATE AMONG WOMEN WHO'VE HAD PLACENTA PREVIA IN THE PAST...
...
WAS I TALKING TO YOU?
...STANDS AT 6%.
...
OF COURSE, SINCE DR. KOUNOTORI LIKES TO CODDLE HIS PATIENTS...
...I WOULDN'T BE SURPRISED IF HE TOLD HER,
"WELL, THERE'S A 94% CHANCE YOU'LL BE ALL RIGHT. LET'S ALL DO OUR BEST!"


BUT ONE IN 20 SUCH PATIENTS DIE.

I THINK AS DOCTORS, IT'S OUR JOB TO DO OUR VERY BEST...
...TO CARRY OUT OUR PATIENTS' WISHES.

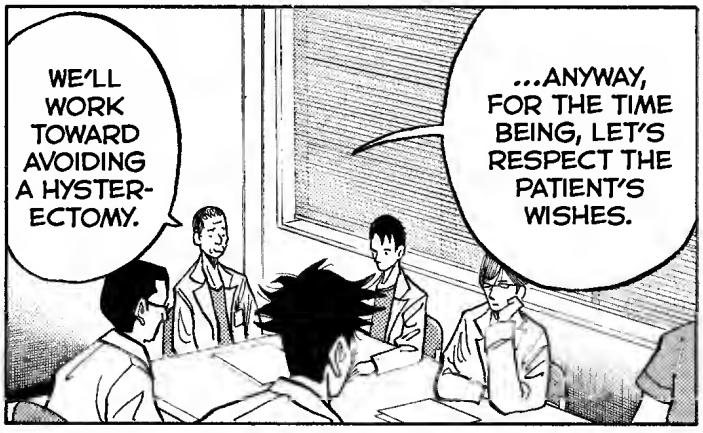

LOOK, DOCTOR, THE PATIENT WANTS TO KEEP HER UTERUS.
AND IT'S NOT AS IF THAT'S OUT OF THE REALM OF POSSIBILITY.

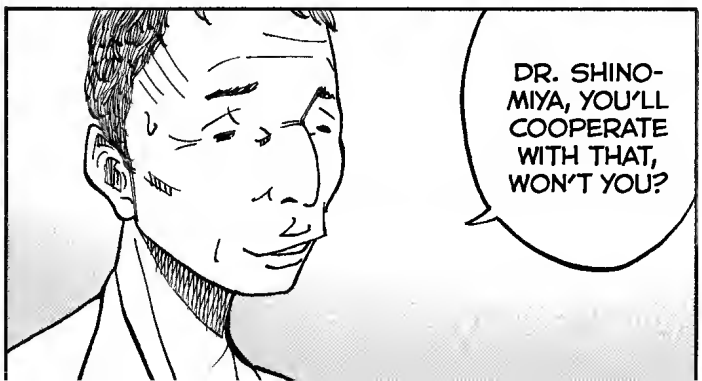
DR. SHINOMIYA, THERE'S A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TREATING THEM PROFESSIONALLY...

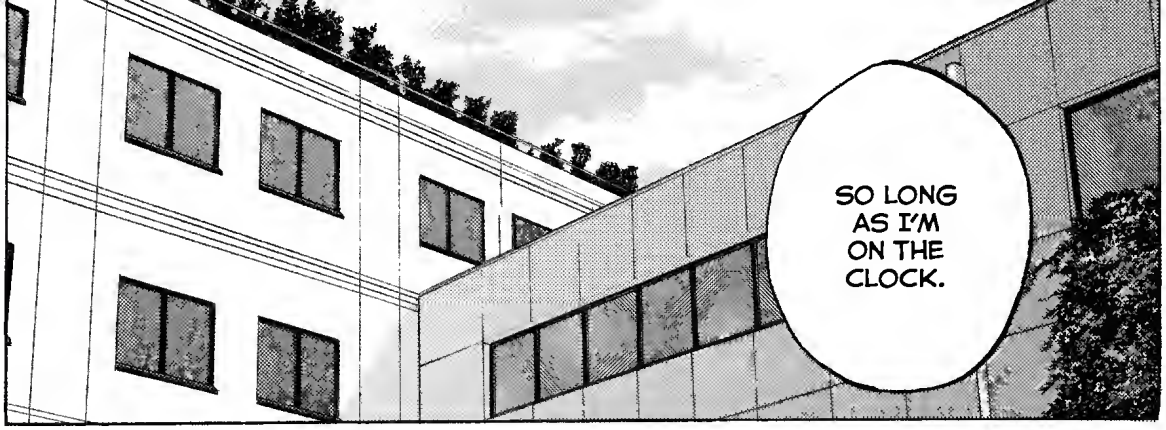

DON'T YOU THINK IT'S TIME YOU TREATED OUR PATIENTS A LITTLE MORE PROFESSIONALLY, DR. KOUNOTORI?

...AND TREATING THEM CALLOUSLY.

I AM A DOCTOR, SIR.
OF COURSE I WILL.


WE'LL WORK TOWARD AVOIDING A HYSTER-ECTOMY.
...ANYWAY, FOR THE TIME BEING, LET'S RESPECT THE PATIENT'S WISHES.

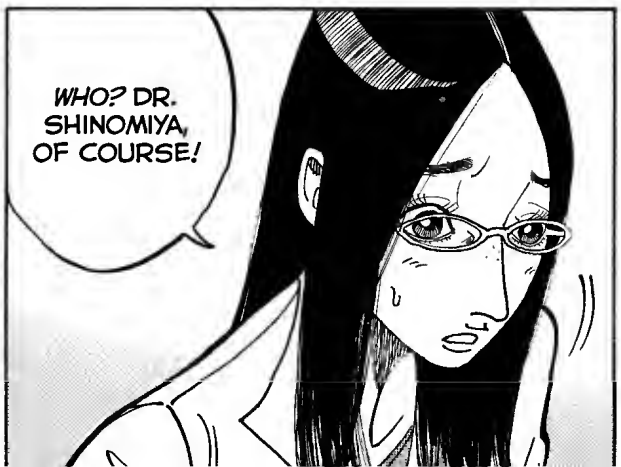

DR. SHINO-MIYA, YOU'LL COOPERATE WITH THAT, WON'T YOU?


SO LONG AS I'M ON THE CLOCK.

...WHY DOES HE ALWAYS HAVE TO TALK LIKE THAT?

WELL, REGARD-LESS OF HOW HE SAYS IT, HE'S RIGHT.

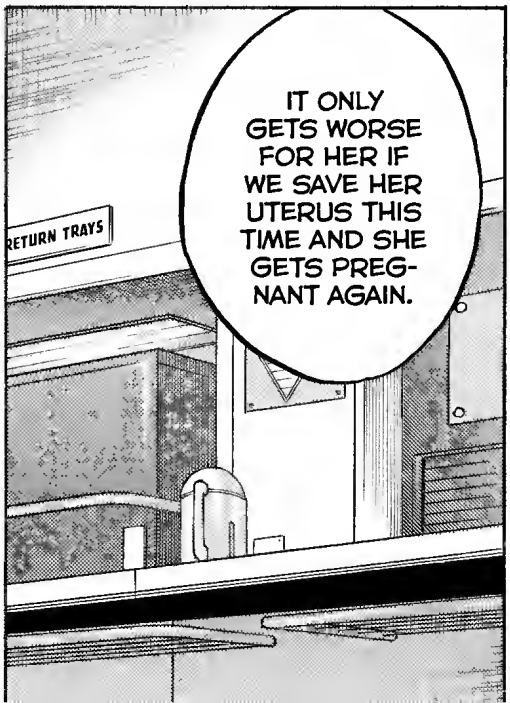
WHO?


WHO? DR. SHINOMIYA, OF COURSE!

IF IT WERE UP TO ME...
SLRRRRP
...I'D REMOVE HER UTERUS, TOO.

IF THE PATIENT HADN'T ASKED ME,
"PLEASE, DON'T TAKE IT OUT," ANYWAY.
SIP
ズズ

HUH...?
OF COURSE!


IT ONLY GETS WORSE FOR HER IF WE SAVE HER UTERUS THIS TIME AND SHE GETS PREG-NANT AGAIN.
RETURN TRAYS

FOR ONE THING, SHE'S ALREADY HAD A C-SECTION ONCE.
SHE'S GOT A HIGH RISK OF PLACENTA ACCRETA.

IT'S JUST LIKE SHINOMIYA SAID. IF THINGS GET THAT BAD...
SUPPOSE THE PLACENTA PENETRATES THE UTERINE MUSCLE OR EVEN INTO HER BLADDER.
AND THAT'S NOT HER BIGGEST WORRY.
SHINOMIYA MIGHT BE IGNORING THE PATIENT'S WISHES...
...
NOT TO MENTION THE POSSIBILITY OF MULTI-PLE ORGAN FAILURE.
...HER RISK OF HEMOR-RHAGE WILL BE EVEN HIGHER.
...BUT IT'S ONLY BECAUSE HE DOESN'T WANT TO SUBJECT HER TO A 6% CHANCE OF DEATH.

A JAM BUN AND MILK, HUH? SOME THINGS NEVER CHANGE.

...WORKING WITH YOU TWO AGAIN!
HEH! AFTER ALL THIS TIME, HERE I AM...

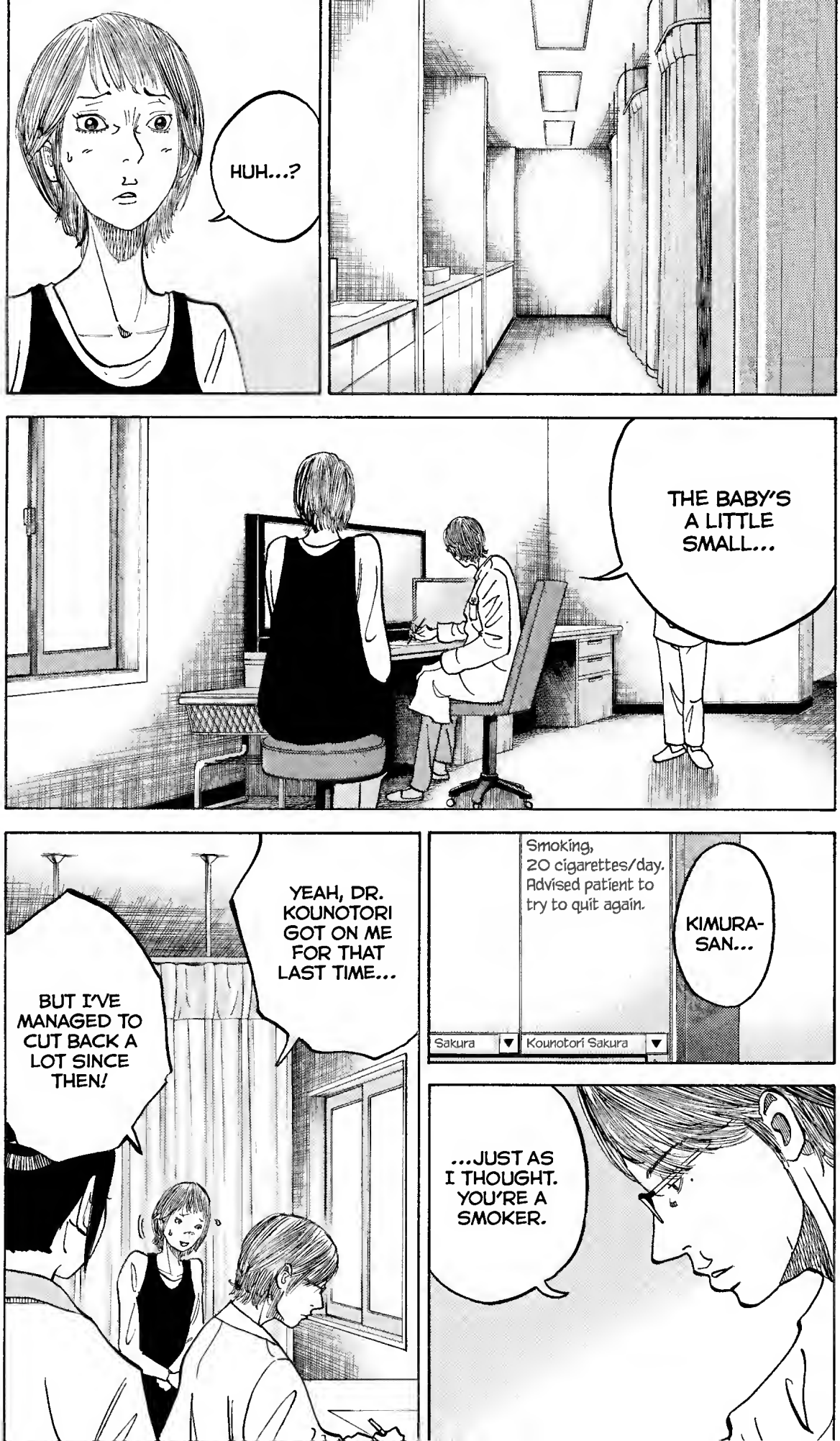
WE'LL BE WORKING TOGETHER THIS AFTERNOON. LET'S GO FOR IT!

I'M NOT GOING OUT FOR PIG TROTTERS, THANK YOU.

HEY! I KNOW!
WHAT SAY WE THROW ME A WELCOME PARTY AND—

JEEZ, FINE...
おうおう POUT

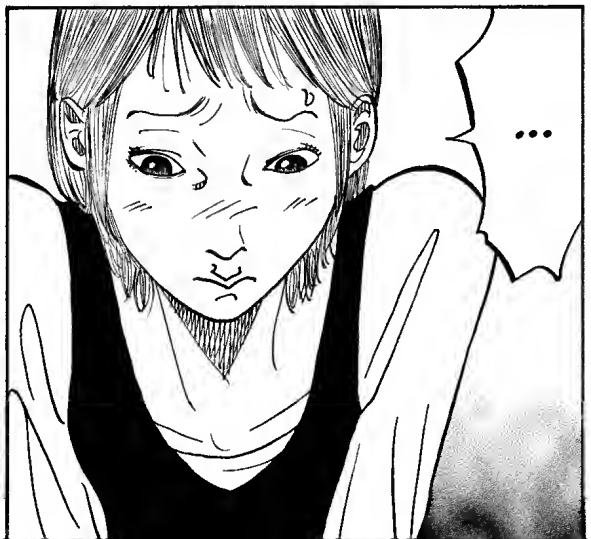
"WOW, LOOK AT YOU! ALMOST 40, AND YOU'RE SEXIER THAN EVER!"
IT'S BEEN YEARS, YOU KNOW.
THE LEAST YOU COULD DO IS SAY "WOW, KOMATSU-SAN, YOU HAVEN'T CHANGED A BIT!"
OH, NEVER MIND...
KOMATSU-SAN...
WHAT? WHAT?!
...YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN?
I'LL STAB YOU.
YOU'RE GETTING WRINKLES.
OH, COME ON, TELL ME!


HUH...?
THE BABY'S A LITTLE SMALL...
YEAH, DR. KOUNOTORI GOT ON ME FOR THAT LAST TIME...
BUT I'VE MANAGED TO CUT BACK A LOT SINCE THEN!
Smoking, 20 cigarettes/day. Advised patient to try to quit again.
KIMURA-SAN...
Sakura
Kounotori Sakura
...JUST AS I THOUGHT. YOU'RE A SMOKER.

GOOD. THEN QUIT TODAY.

IF YOU ASK ME, IF A WOMAN CAN'T STOP SMOKING DURING PREGNAN-CY...
...SHE'S HARDLY FIT TO BE A MOTHER.

JEEZ, DOCTOR.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO GO THAT FAR.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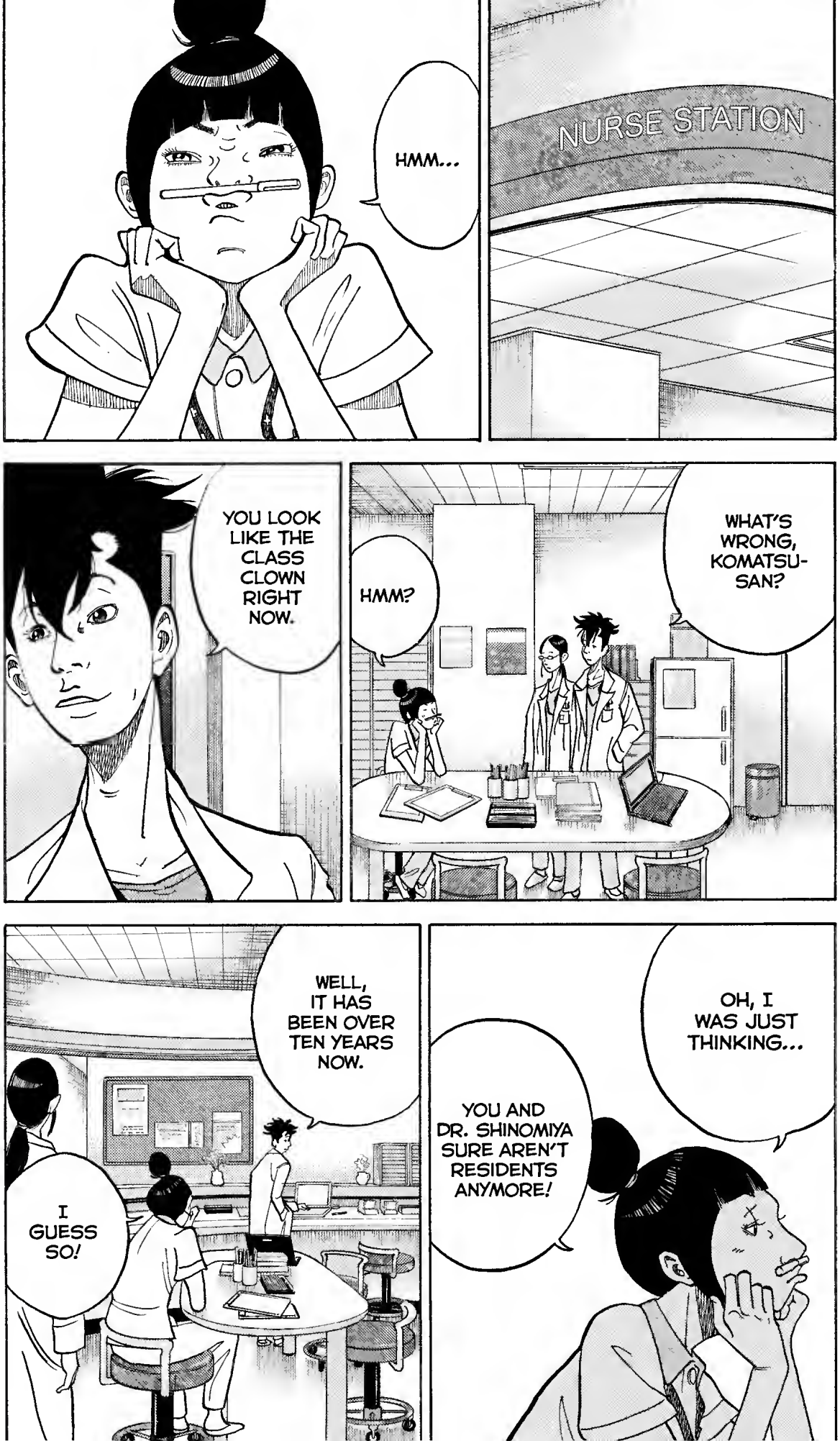
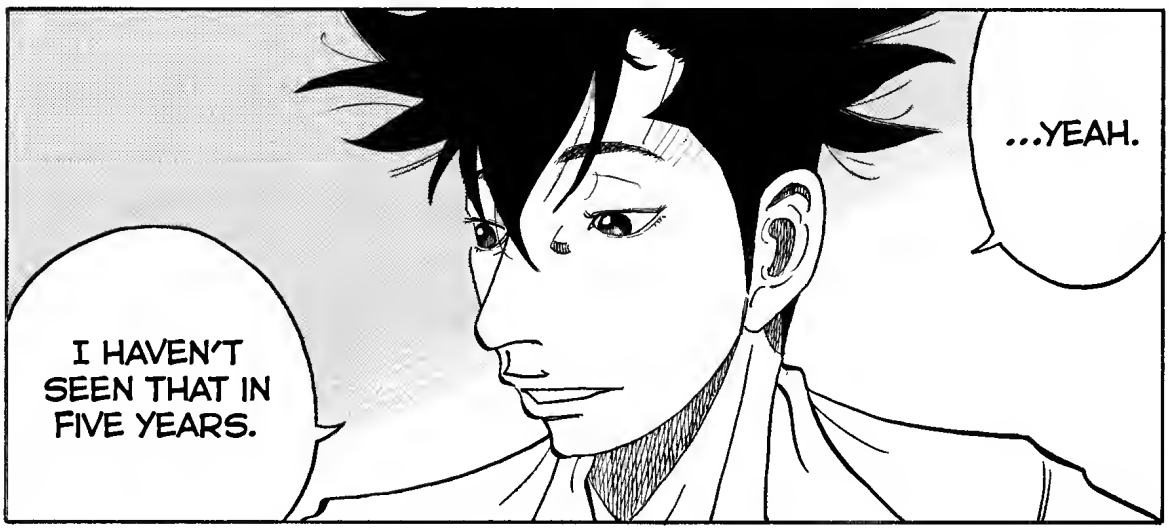

HMM...
NURSE STATION
YOU LOOK LIKE THE CLASS CLOWN RIGHT NOW.
HMM?
WHAT'S WRONG, KOMATSU-SAN?
WELL, IT HAS BEEN OVER TEN YEARS NOW.
I GUESS SO!
OH, I WAS JUST THINKING...
YOU AND DR. SHINOMIYA SURE AREN'T RESIDENTS ANYMORE!

I SUPPOSE I JUST MISS HOW DR. SHINOMIYA USED TO BE.
HE ALWAYS HAD A SMILE FOR HIS PATIENTS.

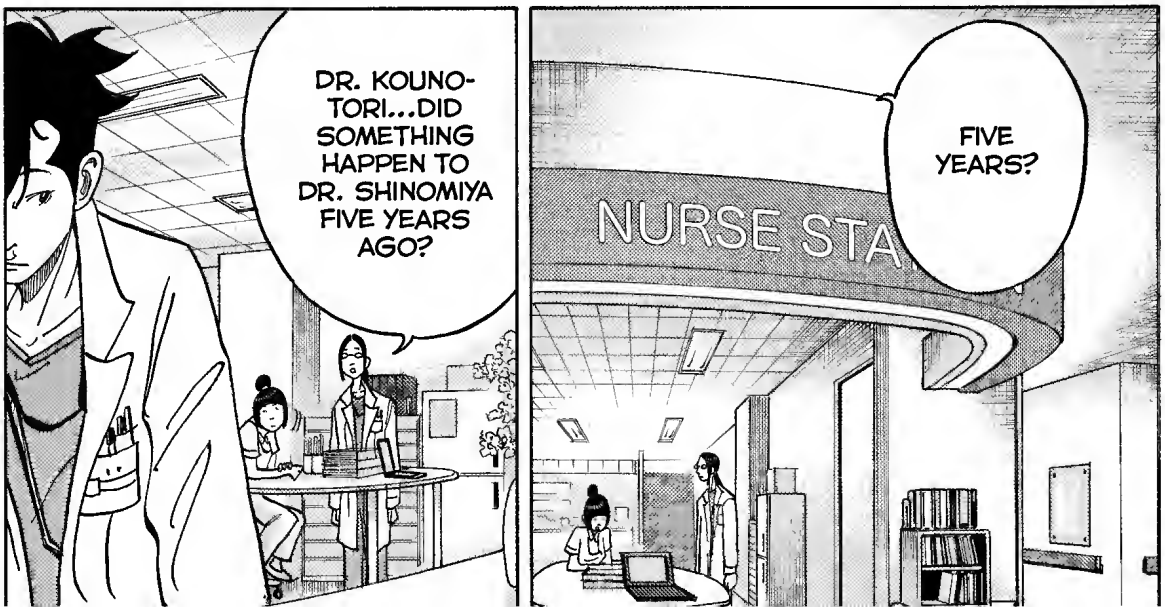

...YEAH.
I HAVEN'T SEEN THAT IN FIVE YEARS.

THE END.
ZZZ
ZZZ

HIS SMILE, I MEAN.
...SHE SAID.

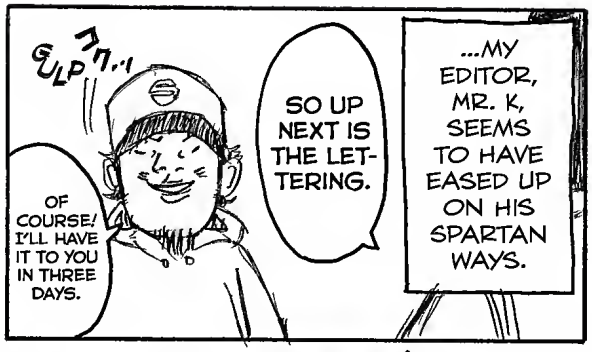
PAT
ZZZ
ZZZ

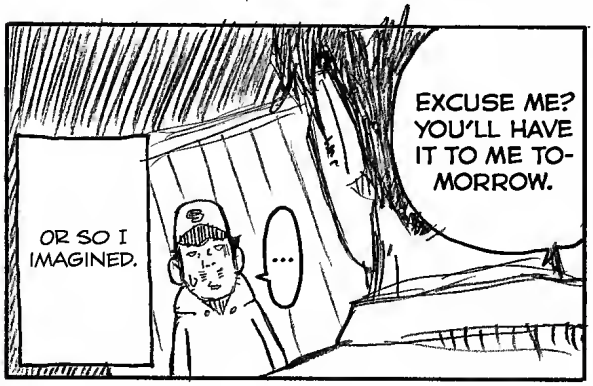
I'LL SEE YOU TOMORROW.
ZZZ
ZZZ
ZZZ
ZZZ

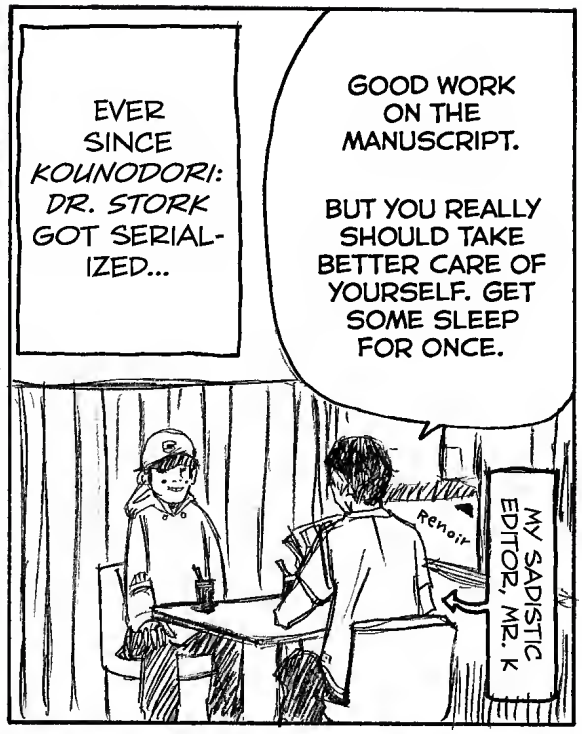

DR. KOUNO-TORI...DID SOMETHING HAPPEN TO DR. SHINOMIYA FIVE YEARS AGO?
NURSE STA
FIVE YEARS?

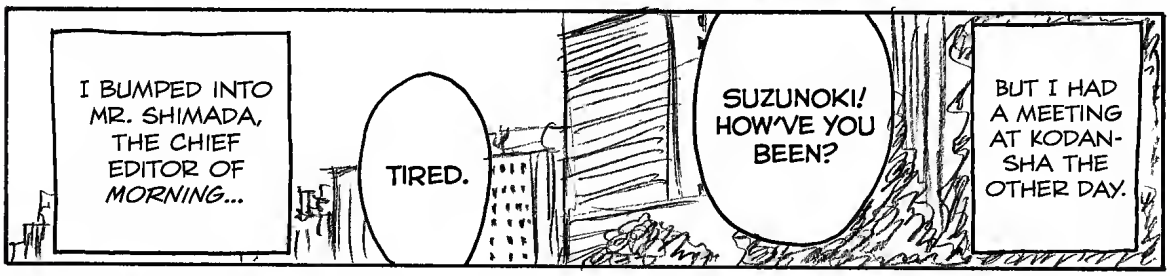
SAKURA...
...HAVE I DONE ANYTHING FOR MY PATIENTS BUT BRING THEM SORROW?

To be continued in Maternal Smoking (2), volume 3.

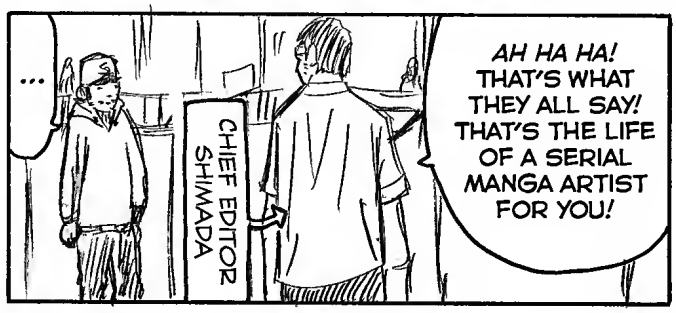

GULP
OF COURSE! I'LL HAVE IT TO YOU IN THREE DAYS.
SO UP NEXT IS THE LETTERING.
...MY EDITOR, MR. K, SEEMS TO HAVE EASED UP ON HIS SPARTAN WAYS.

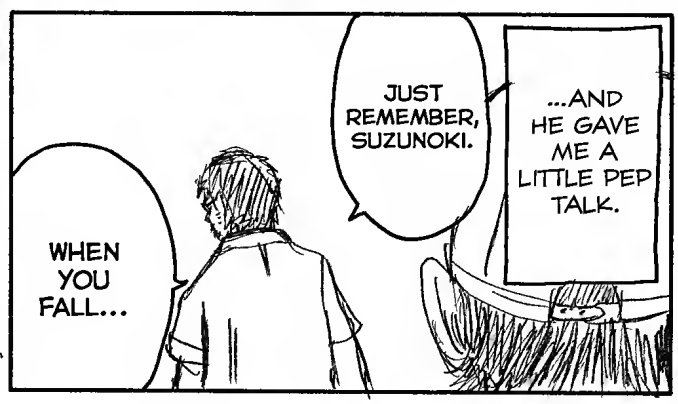

EXCUSE ME? YOU'LL HAVE IT TO ME TOMORROW.
...
OR SO I IMAGINED.

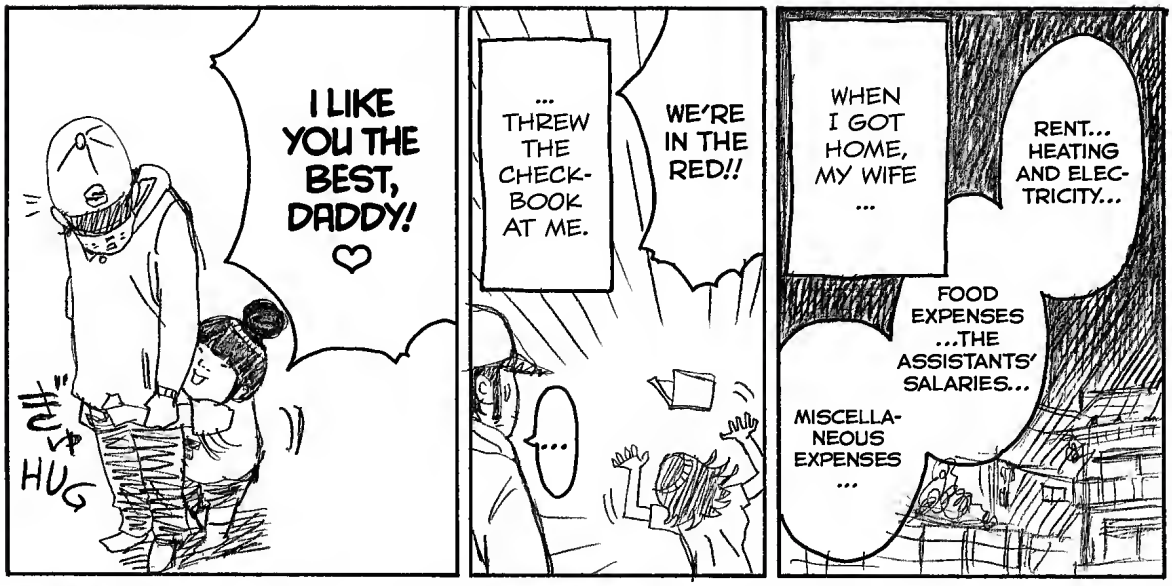

EVER SINCE KOUNODORI: DR. STORK GOT SERIALIZED...
GOOD WORK ON THE MANUSCRIPT.
BUT YOU REALLY SHOULD TAKE BETTER CARE OF YOURSELF. GET SOME SLEEP FOR ONCE.
Renoir
MY SADISTIC EDITOR, MR. K

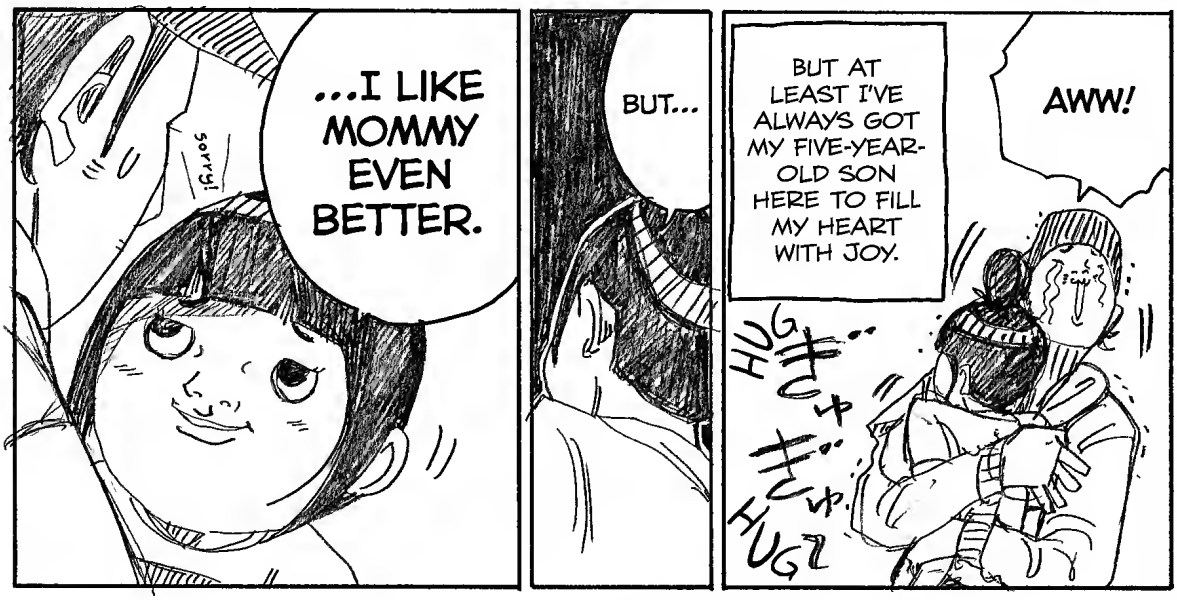

I BUMPED INTO MR. SHIMADA, THE CHIEF EDITOR OF MORNING...
TIRED.
SUZUNOKI! HOW'VE YOU BEEN?
BUT I HAD A MEETING AT KODANSHA THE OTHER DAY.

BUT I CAN'T SAY I GOT IT...
...FALL FORWARD.


...
CHIEF EDITOR SHIMADA
AH HA HA! THAT'S WHAT THEY ALL SAY! THAT'S THE LIFE OF A SERIAL MANGA ARTIST FOR YOU!


WHEN YOU FALL...
JUST REMEMBER, SUZUNOKI.
...AND HE GAVE ME A LITTLE PEP TALK.





Thank you for reading volume 2 of Kounodori: Dr. Stork!

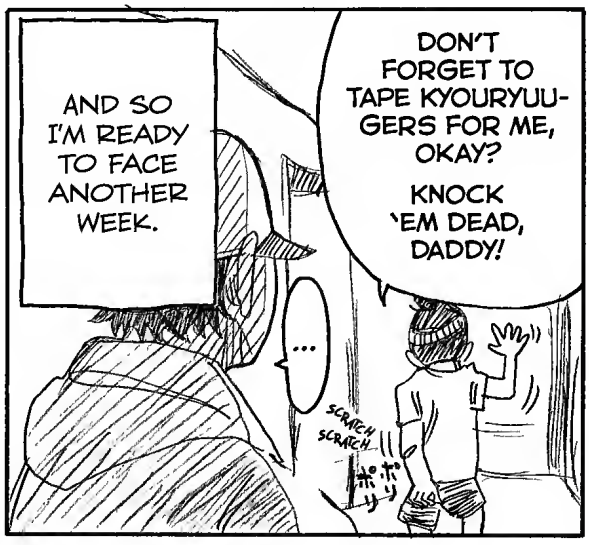
Dr. Song Mihyon, the renowned OB/GYN and producer of the manga The Dancing OB/GYN, had some very kind things to say about my work.

When I started work on Kounodori: Dr. Stork, The Dancing OB/GYN, which Dr. Song put together with Yoshikawa Keito, was a big influence on me. I can't tell you what an honor this is.

Just like volume 1, volume 2 of Kounodori: Dr. Stork wouldn't have gotten off the ground without the very generous support I received from lots of people around me.

Thank you so, so, so much!!!

--Suzunoki Yuu



Inkan, page 55

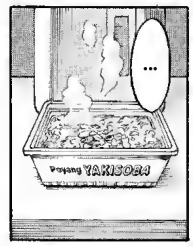
[47.1]

Look closely at the form of consent on page 55 and you'll see a footnote asking signatories without stamps to sign in ink. You've probably seen these stamps before. Many Japanese people own a small, round red stamp with their surname on it; these stamps are called *hanko* or *inkan*. They are used to notarize official documents, and many people purchase them at a discount through their employer. The fact that the working-class Ibas don't have one is a subtle hint at their lower social status compared to the Nomuras: either they can't afford one, or don't see the need.

Poyang Yakisoba, page 75

[75.5]

Dr. Kounotori's favorite brand of instant yakisoba, Poyang Yakisoba, is a play on a real Japanese brand: Peyang Yakisoba. Just like in the West, instant noodles don't exactly have a reputation as health food in Japan, which is why Dr. Kounotori's colleagues tease him about his yakisoba habit — they're loaded with sodium and, as a doctor, he should probably know better.



Shimoya's name, page 137

[137.3]

Shimoya's name is written with the characters "under" and "roof," which leads to some rather esoteric wordplay. It's an outdated term once used to describe the estates of feudal lords, but the roof above the main room of a residence is sometimes also called a *geya*, which, despite its pronunciation, is written with the same characters as Shimoya's name. What does this have to do with her career choice? Originally, Shimoya went on to explain, "when you think about what's under that roof..." The room under the *geya* is called a *moya*, literally a "mother room." She's sheepishly admitting that she didn't pick her profession for a good reason; she just did it because it seemed to fit with her name. Luckily, she learns that Dr. Kounotori, whose name means "stork," was the same way.

"Born in a shirt," page 169

[169.2]

Fewer than one in every 80,000 babies are born covered partially or completely by a membrane called the amnion, or more colloquially, the "caul" or "cowl." While this presents some risk of hypoxemia, or insufficient blood oxygen levels, en-caul births are generally safe as the procedure to remove the caul is quite simple. Many cultures see en-caul births as a good omen, and some even once believed caul children possessed supernatural gifts.

Komatsu-san explains to Yamaguchi-san that there's a saying in Russian for people who seemed to be born into good fortune, "born in a shirt," that has its origins in this idea. While this is true, in the original Japanese, she used a phrase from the Japanese language: she tells her some people call caul children "koubouji," written with the characters for "happiness," "hat" and "child." Because this scene originally required substantial Japanese knowledge to understand, we chose to rewrite it a bit for the English version.

Kounodori: Dr. Stork 2

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English digital edition published by Kodansha Advanced Media, LLC, San Francisco.

www.kodanshacomics.com

ISBN: 9781682336021

Digital Edition: 1.0.0

Translation by Erin Procter
Lettering by Darren Smith
Editing by Sarah Tilson
YKS Services LLC/SKY Japan, INC.